

Task Force on  
Community and Social Services

May, 1973

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# Study Report on Field Services

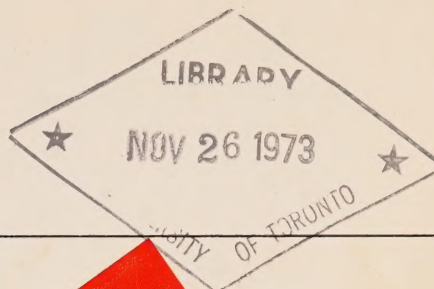
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Task Force on  
Community and  
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Services

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May, 1973.

MEMORANDUM TO: Senior Staff  
All Field Supervisors

SUBJECT: STUDY REPORT ON FIELD SERVICES

This Study Report on Field Services was prepared at the request of the Task Force by Mr. Donald Gardner and forms part of our analysis of existing field delivery systems. While the full report was originally commissioned for the Task Force and not intended for publication, we think the study is so well done that the descriptive sections, of which this document is comprised, warrant general distribution. We would like to emphasize that although the opinions contained in the Report are the author's, we feel that they merit discussion throughout the Ministry.

Based on the proposed Goal and Objectives, the Task Force is presently preparing a paper describing what we think should be the appropriate future role of the Ministry. Using that description and factual material relating to current organization, such as this Study Report, we will then prepare a report on the future structure of the Ministry, both at head office and in the field. Thus, the material generated by this Study forms an important part of the background we require to develop recommendations on Ministry organization and structure.

We would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Gardner and to all the field staff who participated in the Inter-regional Information Project. We recognize that the success of this project is the result of considerable effort by all those who took part. The results of the project are summarized in the appendix to the report.

H. R. Hanson,  
Chairman.






STUDY REPORT ON FIELD SERVICES

Donald H. Gardner

Task Force on Community and Social Services

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# STUDY REPORT ON FIELD SERVICES

## MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

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APPENDIX -





## STUDY REPORT ON FIELD SERVICES

### MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

#### A) INTRODUCTION

The individuals and groups to which the Ministry directs its services and activities are located in all parts of the province. The objects of administration are, therefore, highly dispersed and by and large the nature of the services is such that many of the tasks performed in service delivery must be performed where the individuals and groups are located. The dispersed tasks are usually key tasks in service delivery - the taking and completion of applications for income maintenance, the supervision of supported agencies, consultation and assistance to local authorities and groups. Though in some areas of service, e.g. Child Welfare, groups maintain direct contacts with head office, good task performance by personnel in the field remains crucial. This Ministry is very much, therefore, a field ministry and to no little degree the efficiency and effectiveness with which it seeks to achieve its goals and the esteem in which it is held by the general public and client groups depend upon the adequacy of its field personnel, quantitative and qualitative, and the attention it devotes to field administration. The most appropriate approach to organization for field service must bulk large in any consideration of future Ministry organization.

This report examines present areal and administrative arrangements in the Ministry for field services. It looks also at the roles of field personnel in program decision-making, in policy formulation, in program planning and in controlling and administrative services. It will also discuss briefly practices in the Ministry with regard to some important aspects of field administration; for example, field staff training and development, head office-field communications. Finally, it will consider what approaches the Ministry might consider for the future in the light of the government's present general emphasis upon regionalization and decentralization in provincial public administration.

#### B) PRESENT MINISTRY ORGANIZATION FOR FIELD SERVICES

##### I General Organization:

With the possible exception of the Athletics Commissioner, service delivery in all program branches involves field services. In three branches, these services are provided by staff quartered at head office travelling to the field. These are, in the Children's Services Division, the Child Welfare Branch<sup>1)</sup> and the Children's Institutions Branch, and in the Rehabilitation and

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1) The Child Welfare Branch has one officer in Ottawa.



Assistance Division, the Homes for Aged-Office on Aging Branch. Altogether ten program branches use staff permanently stationed in the field for service delivery. These are as follows:

Children's Services Division

Day Nurseries Branch

Rehabilitation and Assistance Division

Family Benefits Branch

Legal Aid Branch

Municipal Welfare Administration Branch

Social Services Consulting Unit

Vocational Rehabilitation Services Branch

Community Services Division

Citizenship Branch

Community Development Branch

Indian Community Branch

Youth and Recreation Branch

Of these 10 branches, four, however, do not maintain their own separate field organizations. These are the Family Benefits, Municipal Welfare Administration and Legal Aid Branches and the Social Services Consulting Unit. The latter should be considered perhaps as a staff resource unit to other branches, rather than as a program management unit, but it does have certain prerogatives in program development and is thus included here as a program branch. The field services required by these four branches or units are provided by the field personnel of a ministry unit formerly called the Field Services Branch, but now identified in the Ministry's organization chart as Regional Administration. Altogether, therefore, the Ministry has seven separate field structures with seven corps of field workers.

Two branches - Vocational Rehabilitation and Day Nurseries, locate their field staff in the regional offices of Regional Administration. Prior to April, 1972, it was ministry policy to develop these regional offices as common Ministry offices. The Community Services branches, however, when they came into the Ministry brought with them their own developed areal arrangements. As a result, the regional offices became less the common centres for field operations than they had been formerly.

The Ministry, therefore, presents a mixed 'model' from the point of view of field administration. Three branches provide field services through staff quartered at head office.



The field services of three other branches are integrated through Regional Administration. Six branches have unintegrated field services. The Ministry's structure can best be described perhaps as partially integrated field administration.

The geographic and administrative arrangements of each of these seven field organizations are reviewed below. First, however, it should be noted that the Ministry's common or supporting services - Finance and Administration, Research and Planning, Personnel, Training and Staff Development - are not dispersed. These remain centralized. By and large, delegation of authority to the field to act in these areas is limited. This is discussed further below. However, some of these units, e.g. Training and Staff Development and Financial Consulting Branches, visit the field as requested. It should be noted that the Financial Consulting Branch provides not only internal service. It gives consultation on financial and business management to the Ministry's client groups.

## II REGIONAL ADMINISTRATION (FIELD SERVICES BRANCH)

### 1) Field Personnel:

Regional Administration is responsible for conducting the field services required for (1) the provision of Family Benefits throughout the province and General Welfare Assistance in unorganized territories; (2) the provision of social services to beneficiaries of the above programs; (3) the inspection of municipal G.W.A. accounts and the provision of informational and consultative services to municipalities; (4) the assessment of the financial eligibility of applicants for legal aid. In addition, Regional Administration appears to have assumed a general responsibility for ministry representation in the inter-organization planning and co-ordination of public and private social services at the local level. As a result in some regions, particularly the urban ones, senior field staff in the regional offices have become increasingly engaged in a variety of community activities. Finally, regional administration is responsible for the regional offices - for accommodation and supplies and for the "administrative conduct" of all personnel using them. Its authority in this regard is not too clear cut.

The field operations of Regional Administration are conducted through 23 regions, each under a Regional Administrator. The categories of field staff and the numbers in and function of each category are as follows:

(a) Regional Administrators - 23 - The Regional Administrator is directly responsible for the carrying out of field tasks in Family Benefits, General Welfare Administration,

Legal Aid and the social services related thereto, and in Municipal Welfare Administration. He is responsible to and is supervised by the Director of Regional Administration. In the exercising of program management, however, he may communicate directly with the Directors of Family Benefits, Municipal Welfare Assistance, Legal Aid, Social Services Consulting Unit, or with other staff of these Branches for information and clarification of policy. His field staff, though under his line supervision, are subject to the "staff" supervision of the program branches who monitor field task performance for compliance to policy and consistency. This is discussed further below under reporting relationships and communications.

The regional administrator is not responsible for the field services of other programs nor does he have authority over field staff of Ministry branches other than those mentioned above and described below. There are some exceptions to this. In one or two regions, by special arrangement he supervises vocational rehabilitation counsellors. In some regional offices he undertakes the deployment of all clerical staff whether attached to Regional Administration or other branches. He also can exercise disciplinary authority over any personnel in regional offices for non-compliance with office hours or other general ministry requirements. But he evaluates only staff belonging to Regional Administration. However, it would appear that he has a general responsibility for the co-ordination of ministerial services at the regional level (see recent advertisement for Regional Administrator in Kingston and Cornwall). Since field staff of branches other than Regional Administration do not report to him, his authority to carry out this general responsibility is very limited. He must rely upon the arts of leadership, persuasion and diplomacy and upon the co-operation of other branches, both at head office and in the field. Understandably, the amount of interbranch exchange and co-ordination varies from region to region. Some Regional Administrators seem to be successfully cultivating inter-branch communication and co-ordination, developing "collective" leadership, a regional management team. In others, very little if any informal integration exists. Some regional administrators feel that the gap between responsibility and authority and the resulting necessity of relying upon informal mechanisms to accomplish goals is inequitable. Others have found that the climate in the Ministry, though somewhat apprehensive of formal mechanisms, is generally supportive of informal ones and feel relatively comfortable with these.

The Regional Administrator is also considered by the Ministry to be its senior representative in the region. Regional Administrators commonly feel that because of lack of general



authority over all ministry services provided in their regions they cannot act effectively as senior representative. They are limited in the extent to which they can speak for other branches of the Ministry. They are, however, regarded in the communities of their regions as such. This becomes embarrassing if they cannot act as such.

During recent years the Ministry has adopted the stance that it should not hold aloof from, but should participate at the local level in community planning and decision-making with regard to social services. This is part of its mission as a social service agency. Also, the development of adequate social services might help prevent dependency and also assist in realizing ministry goals for its clients. As a result, participation in the community planning process is becoming an important component of field service in Regional Administration. The task has been assumed mainly by Regional Administrators. Such involvement is necessitating increasing inter-branch communication and co-operation in the field. As Regional Administrators they, through their community participation, become involved in questions affecting a variety of Ministry services, e.g., child day care, recreation, half-way houses, etc. This social planning component has developed primarily in the urban regions where there is a plurality of agencies. In rural areas with fewer resources, community organization takes less time. (Perhaps in these regions it should take more.) Not all Regional Administrators feel comfortable with this new task. Community organization is one of the more complex and difficult areas of social work. Younger Regional Administrators with professional training in social work are highly motivated to this kind of work. Older Regional Administrators, steeped in traditional program management, are less motivated, not because of lack of interest but because of lack of knowledge. One Regional Administrator confessed he didn't have the slightest idea of how to get agency A and agency B together when they evidently weren't interested, nor, he added, had the ministry told him how. It seems that the Ministry has adopted a posture but not trained its gladiators.

(b) Field Workers - 308<sup>1)</sup> - Field workers take and complete applications for Family Benefits and G.W.A. They advise and assist applicants and recipients, visit recipients, report changes in circumstances.

There are two levels of field worker. Field Worker I's comprise the bulk of the corps. The field worker II is put to different uses in different regions. In the North, they handle G.W.A. cases. In the south, they may do special investigations, social counselling of an intermediate level, or intake.

Some of the Northern Regions have field workers with specialized Indian caseloads. They are known as Indian Service workers.

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1) Full time and part time as of October, 1972.

(c) Legal Aid Field Workers - 45

These workers interview applicants for legal aid to assess financial eligibility. Some legal aid workers are Clerk 4's.

In those parts of the province where the legal aid caseload is very slight, legal aid work is done by field workers.

(d) Social Workers (MSW) - 9 <sup>1)</sup>

Until October, 1972, field social workers were part of the Family Services Branch. With the transformation of this Branch into the Social Services Consulting Unit, the social workers became part of regional administration. Their functions and activities tend to vary somewhat from region to region but generally their responsibilities relate to the provision of non-financial social services to recipients of Family Benefits and in unorganized territory to G.W.A. recipients. These services include: (i) casework to clients with serious emergency problems or "deep-seated" personality problems. Generally direct casework is receiving less emphasis in favour of (ii) group services to clients aimed at collective problem solving and life enhancement through client self-help groups and associations; (iii) consultation to field workers; (iv) intake; (v) liaison with community social services. At present it appears to be Ministry policy that social service planning will vary from region to region in accordance with the pattern of overall social services in each region. This is discussed below under Regional Program Planning.

At present social service staff are unevenly distributed, being located in only 12 of the 23 regions.

(e) Welfare Field Supervisors - 20

Welfare field supervisors are located in 15 regional offices. Generally they are appointed where there are 8 or 9 field workers and legal aid workers, but there are exceptions to this. Neither Lindsay nor Belleville, with 13 and 9 respectively, have supervisors.

They provide supervision to field workers. In addition, they have been increasingly delegated responsibility by Regional Administrators for the general management of Family Benefits and G.W.A. in their regions. This is particularly the case in urban regions where regional administrators are involved in activities other than income maintenance program administration. In some regions, welfare field supervisors supervise the legal

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1) Those in Field Services Branch as of October, 1972. Other Social Workers formerly in the Family Services Branch are now in Field Services.



aid field workers. A number of supervisors felt that increasing administrative duties are leaving insufficient time for staff development and supervision.

(f) Welfare Assistance Officers - 21

Known generally as field representatives, these officers inspect municipal G.W.A. accounts and advise municipalities re the General Welfare Assistance Act. For further discussion of their work, see pages 42 to 44 below.

2) Geographic Organization:

Regional offices were first established in 1950 as an alternative to the unproclaimed Welfare Units Act. Initially there were 13, now there are 23. There is a long term plan for 25 offices. If the plan is implemented, the two additional regions will likely consist of (1) Peel and Halton Counties and (2) Ontario County. Regional Offices will probably be at Oakville or Brampton and Oshawa.

The regional structure was developed not only with the needs of Regional Administration in mind. The growth of Field Services by the Vocational Rehabilitation Branch also was a factor in determining the regions, although as will be noted below the boundaries of this Branch are not in all cases coterminous with those of Regional Administration.

Generally regions are areas comprised of 3 - 5 counties, the regional office being located in the largest centre suitably located in terms of access to the region. However, several factors were applied to the precise delineation of regional boundaries. These were:

- (1) Regional boundaries could not divide non-county municipalities since regional offices dealt with local government. As a general rule regions incorporate whole counties and districts since cases and statistical data are coded on a county or district boundaries basis. However in a few instances where, because of transportation routes, mail flow, or accessibility, parts of one county or district are naturally served from an adjacent one, this rule is 'broken'. Thus part of Nipissing district is part of the Renfrew region.
- (2) The incidence of public assistance cases and factors affecting this, e.g. total population and economic and social characteristics, was a basic consideration in determining the number of counties in a region. But equality of caseload is not possible nor necessarily desirable because of the other considerations listed below.

- (3) The number of municipalities was also an important factor. In early days, Regional Administrators reviewed municipal accounts (now done by field representatives). This factor has become of less importance with the development of county welfare.
- (4) Geography and distance - In sparsely populated areas in the north, regions will necessarily have smaller caseloads.
- (5) Regions of differing levels of complexity were deliberately established in order to permit differential levels of responsibility for Regional Administrators. Originally four categories of regions were contemplated. One small region (Wingham) was originally contemplated as a training region.
- (6) Regional boundaries reflected conditions of accessibility.
- (7) Plans re regional economic development have been taken into consideration. The Simcoe region was established partly because of proposed industrial development in the area - Hydro, Stelco, ports. The boundaries of economic regions have been taken into consideration. Regional boundaries are also coterminous with those of regional government but could embrace more than one regional government.
- (8) Regions should be of a size to give Regional Administrators staff of manageable size. Originally Regional Administrators directly supervised field workers. The Field Services Branch used a general guideline of 12 workers per supervisor.

The weight of each of these factors will vary from region to region; but the fact that regions vary in geographic extent, caseloads, etc. does not indicate an absence of rationality. Regions were established primarily for the administration of public assistance. They were not developed as common regions for the field administration of all ministry services.

Political considerations have also influenced areal arrangements as well as purely administrative ones. It has been a factor in the location of some regional offices and the drawing of some boundaries. Thus the Belleville region contains only half of Northumberland and Durham. Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry is divided between the Cornwall and Kingston regions. The political factor has generally countered those of administrative rationality.



It would appear that the intent noted in item 5 above has never been fully implemented. At the present time regional administrators tend to be classified according to their educational qualifications. Some, with the M.S.W. degree have been taken at higher levels than existing Regional Administrators but assigned to smaller regions. One region with caseload of some 2,600 has an R.A.4; another with a caseload of 3,600 has a R.A.2. It would appear that a change in emphasis with regard to qualifications desired in Regional Administrators has run counter to the concept of the promotional ladder in the field. This has occasioned some bitterness among some Regional Administrators who feel that it is not equitable for colleagues two levels higher to have responsibilities no greater than their own. Their complaint is justified. There are other ways of attracting the kind of people that are desired.<sup>1)</sup>

Regions vary considerably in size, caseloads and staff as can be seen in Table I. It is to be expected that regions containing metropolitan areas would be smaller geographically than rural areas and have higher aggregate caseloads. Likewise, it is to be expected that the northern regions would be large. But rather strange variations are to be found in regions lying between these extremes. Thus there are two regions, Owen Sound and Wingham, which are comprised of only two counties each and have caseloads of under 1,600. By contrast, the Lindsay region covers five counties and extends from Lake Ontario to Haliburton and has a caseload of 4,168. This is a most mysterious variation. The three counties of Hamilton, Wentworth and Peel comprise one region with a total caseload of some 7,970; the three counties of Lambton, Kent and Essex with a total caseload of some 6,300 comprise two regions, Windsor and Chatham. Undoubtedly some of these differences are due to caseload growth and administrative lag; some are due to the fact that it is necessary to contain whole counties in regions and an examination of caseloads by county might prove enlightening. But on the face of it, there would appear to be cause for some areal re-organization. For example, a region the size of London (Middlesex, Elgin and Oxford) with a caseload of some 4,500 would appear to be a reasonable service area. It has a full corps of 17 field workers, a not unmanageable span of control, although there perhaps should be two rather than one welfare field supervisor. But a region of this size permits differentiation of staff, both in terms of task and of level. In a ministry such as Community and Social Services, which is a field ministry, it is important that regions have these administrative attributes. If this is the case, the regions of Waterloo and Wingham, with an aggregate caseload of some 3,673 could perhaps be considered for amalgamation.

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1) It is understood that this matter has been under consideration in the Regional Administration Branch.

### 3) Reporting Relationships and Communications

As noted earlier, all field staff attached to Regional Administration report directly or through their supervisor to the Regional Administrator who in turn reports to the Director of Regional Administration. The policies and procedures governing field task performance in the various programs are, however, established and issued by the program branches at head office. In addition, the program branches would appear to have authority to monitor task performance for compliance with policies and procedures. In other words, Regional Administrators are responsible to headquarters for their task performance and administrative behaviour. Officially, Regional Administrators are responsible to the Director of Regional Administration who is their line supervisor.

Branches and units may visit the regions for purposes of training and consultation although this kind of staff supervision seems to have been somewhat sporadic. Regional Administrators have freedom to contact the program branches directly for information and clarification. There is also direct supervisor-to-supervisor communication between field and branch in the administration of Family Benefits on individual cases.

The Directors of Family Benefits, Municipal Welfare Administration, Legal Aid and the Social Services Consulting Unit report to the Executive Director of Rehabilitation and Assistance. The Director of Regional Administration, however, reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister. Even though its direct program responsibilities are confined to Rehabilitation and Assistance Programs, the separation of regional administration from this Division is advantageous. It gives the Deputy Minister's office direct access to the Regional Administrator for special investigations. It gives a certain legitimacy to regional administrators as senior representatives of the Ministry and as co-ordinators of Ministry programs in the field. But there is ambiguity in an arrangement that places a senior field official in a direct reporting chain from the Deputy Minister's office but confines his line authority to certain programs. It creates an ambivalence which each regional administrator and other ministry staff in his region must resolve as best they can. As noted earlier, some have succeeded in securing inter-branch exchange and co-operation through informal mechanisms. Others have not.

The integration of some field services through Regional Administration (i.e. the Field Services Branch) seems to have suffered from certain weaknesses in the past. Perhaps



because of a reluctance to encroach on each others prerogatives there seems not to have developed any clear cut mechanisms and procedures to govern the relations and communications between the program branches involved and the regions. Over the years, for example, there has been little communication between Municipal Welfare Administration and field representatives. The latter have met as a group only once and the Branch at the present time feels it is getting insufficient information and feed back on implementation of its policies in the field. The Family Benefits Branch likewise seems to feel insecure with regard to the level of respect and understanding afforded its program by some regional administrators. Regional administrators, for their part, claim that communications with Branches have to be established at their initiative. Those that cultivate relationships get a positive response - they can be developed. Those that do not tend to become isolated. But there is some evidence that Regional Administrators themselves don't fully grasp the prerequisites of integrated field administration. The Municipal Welfare Administration Branch, for example, is proposing to strengthen its consultative services to field representatives. The Social Services Consulting Unit has, as its name implies, a major responsibility to offer consultation to the Regional Administrators. Yet there is an underlying discomfort among Regional Administrators with these Branch initiatives - a feeling that they will be deluged with a "plethora of consultants" from head office who will be supervisors in disguise. If the Ministry is to broaden its regional administration, however, the development of strong specialized staff services to the field will be necessary.

In Regional Administration we have the integrated field administration of some of the Ministry's programs but it should be noted that this integration has not been accomplished by a complete decentralization of program decision-making. Regional Administrators have considerable authority in program management, that is in organizing work and deploying staff. One finds, for example, interesting variations among regions in the way they are organized for intake, for handling special investigations, in the organization of legal aid work, in the utilization of social workers. There are variations likewise in the utilization of field representatives and considerable discretionary decision-making takes place in the field in dealing with and advising municipalities. Also, regional administrators in the North are responsible for eligibility decision-making with regard to G.W.A. in unorganized territories. However, as discussed elsewhere, decision-making in Family Benefits is centralized, being the responsibility of the Family Benefits

Branch at Queen's Park. The influence of this pattern of decision-making upon field administration is difficult to assess. Some regional administrators feel that it complicates the exercise of their responsibilities as program managers, limiting their capacity to control work flow and render good service to clients. To field workers and their supervisors, the decision process in Family Benefits appears unduly bureaucratic and time-consuming. Thus the system has introduced some stresses and strains and misunderstandings in headquarters-field relations. To regional administrators and field workers schooled in the doctrine of decentralization and grass rootism, the centralization of decision-making in Family Benefits is supportive of their tendency to adopt a conspiracy view of administration, namely that it is the intent of the system to perpetuate itself rather than serve the clients. This matter is discussed further in a later section of this Report. It is mentioned here to illustrate that problems can arise when program management in the field is integrated but service delivery decision-making remains centralized and functional.

### III VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES BRANCH

#### 1) Number and functions of Field Staff:

This Branch is responsible for the administration of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act through which vocational assessment and training services are provided directly or through purchase of service to disabled persons. Maintenance allowances are also provided to clients who are in financial need as defined by the Act. The Branch maintains a corps of field supervisors and counsellors located in the regional offices discussed above. Field staff are responsible for intake, for authorizing and securing services necessary for assessment and for developing for each client a vocational rehabilitation program. Each program is forwarded to head office for approval.

Field staff is comprised of 17 supervisors, 68 counsellors and 19 fee-for-service counsellors. In all instances except one, field supervisors are located in the regional offices (Regional Administration). The one exception is the supervisor located at Oshawa. All field counsellors are stationed in ministry regional offices and sub-offices.



## 2) Geographic Arrangement

Though Vocational Rehabilitation and Regional Administration have common offices, they do not have common boundaries. Of Rehabilitation's 18 regions, only three are the same as Regional Administration; namely, Barrie, Owen Sound and St. Catharines. In a few instances, the boundaries divide counties or districts; those of Regional Administration do not. Thus, in Rehabilitation, part of Halton is served from Toronto, part from Hamilton. Most of Hastings is joined in one region with Peterborough county but the lower part of Hastings is served from Kingston. The Sudbury region includes parts of Alboma and Parry Sound districts. Vocational Rehabilitation areas generally are larger than those in regional administration. The Thunder Bay office services one area comprised of the Thunder Bay and Keewatin Regions. Elsewhere, however, Vocational Rehabilitation groupings of districts and counties are different from Regional Administration. Thus Kent is served from Windsor, Lambton from London. In Regional Administration these two counties form the Chatham region.

Unlike Regional Administration, Rehabilitation does not have to follow county boundaries. The branch, therefore, is perhaps somewhat freer to adjust boundaries to internal operational and administrative factors such as caseload and supervision. However, there are external factors influencing Rehabilitation's boundaries. The most important of these is the location of medical and rehabilitation resources and their hinterlands. Thus Kingston, as a health and medical centre, seems to command lower Hastings and Prince Edward counties rather than Peterborough. The influence of Toronto seems to extend well into Halton County but not quite to the eastern boundary of York. This is the major reason why Rehabilitation's regions divide counties. Also, wherever possible supervisor staff and counsellors are located where health services are. For example, staff centred in Ottawa and Thunder Bay could be deployed in smaller regions - total caseloads would certainly permit it. But Ottawa and Thunder Bay are the health and medical capitals of these large regions and program operations are centred in them. Thus there are 5 counsellors in Thunder Bay serving the whole northwest with a caseload of 520. Could not one or two be stationed in Keewatin? Another important external factor influencing Rehabilitation's areal arrangements is the labour market and its regional configurations. The geography of vocational rehabilitation should be in harmony with the geography of employment services and placement opportunities. Thus while income maintenance is tied to the governmental map of Ontario, Rehabilitation is tied to its health and economic maps. While the regions served by the two branches overlap in areas immediately adjacent to regional offices, they diverge in their peripheries.

The Vocational Rehabilitation program seems to be characterized by an uneven geographic distribution of demand. The number of persons in the total population for each rehabilitation client (i.e. total population in region served divided by caseload, plus waiting list) in selected districts is shown below.

Thunder Bay	-	388
Timmins, Kirkland Lake	-	1,423
Sudbury	-	1,000
Sault Ste. Marie	-	1,000
North Bay	-	560
Owen Sound	-	1,733
Windsor	-	1,457
London	-	1,434

In the Thunder Bay region one person in approximately every 388 is a present or waiting client. In Owen Sound, one person in every 1,733 is so distinguished!! Whether or not these remarkable differences in demand reflect equal differences in need is a matter which the Ministry should take under close consideration. By and large clients for rehabilitation are referred to the field offices by other agencies. These demand figures are reflections in good part, therefore, of the number of referral agencies and of their referring practices. These practices in turn are reflected by the interest and knowledge of the agencies in vocational rehabilitation. The question arises as to what extent demand for Branch services is a function not of need but of the institutional characteristics of this field of service in any given area and of the extent to which there is inequity in the delivery of services to those needing them. At the present time, the Ministry cannot correct this inequity because it depends on other unevenly distributed resources to find the clients and to service them. It could, of course, take a more independent role in casefinding but if it did, would the resources needed to meet the discovered need exist?

At any rate, this unevenness of demand together with other factors discussed earlier has resulted in great variations in regional caseloads. There is also considerable variation in average caseloads per worker. The counsellor in Timmins has a caseload of 30. The supervisor and counsellor at Sudbury have between them a caseload of 182, or 91 each. Both of these are northern districts. Such variations in caseloads are again inequitable. They are undoubtedly obvious to the Branch which readily admits that its resources are spread much too thinly and more so in some regions than in others. Presumably because of waiting lists in all regions, it does not feel it can steal from one region to strengthen another.



### 3) Branch Organization for Field Services

The Branch at head office is comprised of the Director, Assistant Director and a group of specialists, for example in workshops, restorative services. Major responsibility for the management and supervision of field operations lies with the Assistant Director. The specialists report to the Director but deal directly with field staff in their program areas of specialization. They make frequent visits to the field. By and large field staff are program generalists - they deal with all aspects of rehabilitation, but as noted they receive staff service from the head office specialists. Some steps have been taken, however, toward task specialization in the field. Thus in some regions there are counsellors specializing in placement for on-the-job training. The number of counsellors under each supervisor varies from one to eight. This variation in span of control is occasioned by the uneven geographic deployment of counsellors and by the fact that certain responsibilities in the field are required to be exercised by staff at the supervisory level. In two regions the one counsellor is supervised by head office. In two others, they are supervised by Regional Administrators. It is assumed that in regions with one supervisor and one counsellor, both have a caseload.

## IV THE DAY NURSERIES BRANCH

Field staff of the Day Nurseries Branch inspect and advise day nurseries with respect to licensing and provincial grants and generally act as child care specialists, providing consultation and training services to public and private day nurseries in their districts.

There are 21 child development counsellors. These are located in Toronto (head office, not regional office) and in 7 regional offices and sub-offices. The offices are grouped into regions as follows:

EAST	-	Ottawa	-	3 counsellors
WEST	-	Kitchener	-	1 counsellor
		Hamilton	-	1 counsellor
		London	-	1 counsellor
		Oakville	-	2 counsellors
		St. Catharines	-	1 counsellor
		Windsor	-	1 counsellor
CENTRAL	-	Toronto (Queen's Park)	-	11 counsellors

In each region one counsellor is designated as supervisor to assist and advise other staff in the region. These supervising counsellors, however, are not classified or paid as supervisors. Four of the counsellors in Toronto also act as specialists in infant day care, in private home day care, in day nurseries for retarded children and in day nurseries for Indian children.

The criteria used in delineating the districts served by field staff are workload and distance. It is general policy to place counsellors in cities that have within them and in their surrounding areas 40 nurseries. Boundaries are also drawn so that nurseries at the peripheries of a district will be roughly equidistant from the worker's office in order to minimize travelling time. Day care is a developing field of service and development does not always respect geographic balance. District boundaries are flexible, therefore, and are adjusted as necessary in the interests of equitable workloads and service delivery. They are not coterminous with those of Regional Administration. Thus the Toronto office serves, among others, Peel County (part of Hamilton region) and Dufferin County (part of Barrie region). The worker in London serves 5 counties; the London regional office serves three. Lack of field staff in the North-West is rendering it difficult to provide adequate service there. The Director feels there should be a worker in North Bay to serve particularly Indian Communities in the North.

Reports from field workers are sent to the Director of the Branch, who in October, 1972, carried field administration as well as overall program management. The Branch, however, has developed a proposal (still under consideration in the fall of 1972) for reorganization. The proposal entailed the appointment of an Assistant Director with responsibility for field services and three full-time regional supervisors. The specialists would also become full-time. Since the reorganization did not envisage additional field staff, it would seem that seven of the existing complement would be removed from on-going direct service. This would significantly increase field workloads.

## V THE COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

Each of the Branches of the Community Services Division administers programs of financial assistance and consultation to public and private groups and are designed to assist local communities and organizations develop services and realize desired objectives in their different program areas.



Thus in Youth and Recreation these services and goals relate to recreation and informal education; in Citizenship to the integration and well being of newcomers; in Indian Community Development to the economic and social development of Indian Communities; in Community Development to citizen participation through group action in community affairs.

Field staff in each case act as general representatives of their branches: they inform and advise their client groups as to branch programs and services, provide professional consultation and assistance to client organizations and groups, review fundable services for compliance and examine requests for financial assistance and inform and advise head office regarding these.

The number of field staff in each of the community services branches is as follows:

Citizenship Branch	-	5
Community Development Branch	-	2
Indian Community Branch	-	14
Youth and Recreation Branch	-	17

The areal arrangements and organization of each field service are described briefly below:

(1) Youth and Recreation Branch

Field services of the Youth and Recreation Branch are delivered through 5 regions and 13 districts, each region being under an Assistant Superintendant. The regions are very similar to the five proposed planning regions - - - - North-Western, North-Eastern, Central, South-Western and Eastern. Field consultants are assigned to the districts within regions in accordance to workloads. The basic factor in workload is the number of communities, i.e. municipalities served. However, the Branch's regions and districts were established to fit into the regional structure of the Ministry of Education. By happenstance, however, the Assistant Superintendants (at the regional level) are located in the same cities as the Ministry's regional offices. So also, Dryden excepted, are the field consultants. But in all cases they are in different offices.

Regions and the districts within them vary in size and the number of communities they contain. Each district is comprised, with one or two exceptions, of 2 - 6 whole counties or, in the north, of territorial districts.

As in other branches, distance is an important factor in determining the size of a region, particularly in the North. Fewer communities in an assigned area, however, do not necessarily mean lighter caseloads. Communities in the South with well-developed leisure time services don't require the same amount of service as small isolated communities with few resources.

In the south the boundaries of Youth and Recreation regions are not coterminous with those of Regional Administration. The Simcoe region, for example, is divided by Youth and Recreation between its Western and its Central Regions. Part of the Lindsay region is in Youth and Recreation's Central region, part in its Eastern. In the North, however, Youth and Recreation boundaries and those of Regional Administration are coterminous. The North-Western Region, for example, contains the Thunder Bay and Keewatin Regions. Its Northern Region contains Regional Administration's Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Kirkland Lake and North Bay regions. Also districts within the regions divide the "ministry's" regions, but in the north they do not.

When the Branch was transferred to this Ministry, the Ministry of Education retained seven consultants, depleting the field establishment by about 1/3. This resulted in uneven coverage geographically and a decline in the Branch's ability to meet demands for service. One regional superintendent reported dissatisfaction among municipalities with the decline in service and impossible workloads that were affecting staff morale. The Director of Community Programs estimated that field consultants were meeting 55% of demands. More specifically, the retention of seven field staff by the Department of Education left two offices and districts - Kingston and Hanover, unstaffed. It reduced from three to one the field staff at North Bay. It also removed consultants in the Willowdale and Toronto offices, leaving only an assistant superintendent in Willowdale and a consultant in St. Catharines to serve Metropolitan Toronto and the thirteen counties of the Central Region.

The Youth and Recreation Branch is comprised of two sections: (1) The Community Program section, which is responsible for field services; and (2) the Recreation Programs Section which is comprised of specialist units in Leadership Education, Physical Recreation, Cultural Programs, Youth Services and Outdoor Recreation. Field staff, as indicated, report to the Superintendent of Community Programs. There is direct communication, however, between field consultants and the specialists in the Recreation Programs Section. These personnel advise and assist field staff and visit the field to engage in projects where their expertise is required. In fact, they spend a lot of time in the field but they do not act independently of field staff. As indicated above, the consultants of each region are

supervised by Assistant Superintendants. Each consultant is a generalist in his or her assigned region. Any special expertise possessed by a field consultant can be utilized by colleagues in the same region and each regional group can act as a team, with co-ordination by the regional assistant superintendant. There is here, in embryo, a model for combining general and specialized tasks in the field that might have possibilities for inter-branch co-ordination.

## (2) Citizenship Branch

The regions assigned to the five field officers do not, with one exception, divide those of Regional Administration. The Windsor office, for example, covers the Windsor and Chatham Regions; the Hamilton office covers the London, Wingham, Waterloo, Simcoe, Hamilton and St. Catharines regions. The Toronto field worker, however, covers Ontario county, which in Regional Administration is part of the Lindsay Region. The Ottawa office covers a very large area that extends from the Quebec boundary to Ontario county south of Nipissing and Haliburton. The worker at Thunder Bay covers all of the North-West and North-East as well as Parry Sound, Muskoka, Nipissing and Haliburton. These regions do not coincide with those proposed by the Decentralization Task Force. If the Ministry was to adopt these as common regions, the geographic arrangements of the Citizenship Branch would need to be changed. The five regions assigned to field staff of the Citizenship Branch are quite different also from those of the Youth and Recreation Branch and the Indian Community Branch.

The Citizenship Branch at head office is comprised of four program units and a supervisor of field services to whom field staff report. The office of the latter is the focal point for the directing, guiding, assessing of field services and the development of field staff. Field staff, however, may deal directly with staff of the program units as required. No head office staff visits the field without telling the field office first.

## (3) Indian Community Branch

The Indian Community Branch has three regions each presently under, or soon to be under, a regional supervisor. The boundaries of these regions and the districts within them



divide districts and counties and are determined by various factors - workloads, convenience, the wishes of Indian communities as to field staff. Boundaries are very flexible and are readily changed as circumstances change. At the present time the regions are as follows:

Kenora - includes district offices at Red Lake, Dryden and Fort Frances. Serves communities in Kenora and Rainy River districts, eastern Patricia and north-west corner of Thunder Bay District.

Thunder Bay - takes in district offices in Geraldton and Sault Ste. Marie. Covers Thunder Bay District, parts of Patricia and Cochrane and Algoma Districts.

Sudbury - will cover the rest of the province with district offices at Moosonee, Orillia and Brantford. The Brantford district office will be responsible for all southern Ontario west of a line running through York and Simcoe counties. The Orillia office will be responsible for all of southern Ontario east of this line, plus Muskoka, Parry Sound, Nipissing and Haliburton.

These regions and districts are not coterminous with those of Regional Administration or other branches in the Community Services Division. Thus in the Keewatin region there are Indian Community workers reporting to Kenora, Thunder Bay and Sudbury. Nor are they coterminous with the regions proposed by the Decentralization Task Force. The adoption of common regions by the Ministry would entail adjustments by the Branch in their areal arrangements. One officer of the Branch felt, however, it could adapt its structure to the five economic regions. It would be advantageous to the Branch if all Ministries and agencies adopted common regions and regional centres since it works closely in the field with a number of these.

Many of the projects funded by the Indian Community Branch require the co-ordination of services provided by various provincial agencies. Co-ordination is required, both in the field and at head office. The branch is structured in a manner to facilitate this "co-ordination of co-ordination". Thus the Assistant Director supervises both the field officers and three project co-ordinators at head office. Field staff report to the Assistant Director, but when engaged in a project work directly with the head office co-ordinator assigned to that project.

As indicated above there is a supervisory level in the field, each of the three regions having a supervisor. However, each field officer communicates directly with head office as required in day-to-day work. Field staff by and large are generalists but some have acquired specialized knowledge, e.g. housing. Because of this specialized knowledge, they may be assigned to assist in a project in another area. There is considerable flexibility in the territorial deployment of staff.

(4) Community Development Branch

At the time of this study, this branch has a contract field worker in Toronto and a field worker located in the St. Catharines regional office. It had previously had field workers in Windsor and Ottawa, but these positions were unfilled. At head office the Branch consisted of a Consulting Services Unit and a Field Services Unit, both reporting to the Branch Director. Field staff reported to the chief of Field Services.

C) DECISION MAKING IN SERVICE DELIVERY

This section of the report will deal with the respective responsibilities of head office and field in service delivery decision-making, that is in making decisions as to the granting of benefits and services. It does not deal with decision-making in program management. This is discussed later. It concentrates upon programs with field staff. Existing field resources play a very minor, if any, role in service delivery of other programs, e.g. Child Welfare, Homes for the Aged. They are not called upon, for example, to provide information or opinion as to conditions or needs in the various regions. Staff of these branches when in the field do not, it would appear, communicate with Regional Administrators or other field staff to any significant degree, a matter of concern to some Regional Administrators.

Stress is placed in this section upon decision-making as a process which involves the gathering and evaluation of facts, the exploration of alternatives and the making of recommendations as well as the making of final decisions. It emphasizes the importance of "pre-finalization" stages in decision-making, since these can frequently determine what in fact the final decision will be and will inevitably influence the quality of decision-making.

The pattern of decision-making influences the delivery of service in various ways - its quickness, consistency, relations with clients, etc. It also has many internal implications; implications, for example, for communications, administrative organization and staffing. Though perhaps the major consideration in locating responsibility for decision-making functions should be the enhancement of service delivery, the internal considerations should not be lost sight of.



I) FAMILY BENEFITS

In Family Benefits, the key program decisions are those pertaining to the initial or continuing eligibility of clients and to the amount of assistance to be granted in each case. These decisions are made by personnel of the Family Benefits Branch at Queen's Park on the basis of completed application forms and documents processed by field workers.

The decision process is not a simple one. Basically it consists of three stages: (i) a brief intake stage; (ii) the application stage, and (iii) the determination stage. The first two stages are conducted mostly in the field, although head office does have some responsibility with regard to them. The determination stage or finalization is carried out at head office through several mechanisms. The application stage in many cases involves the performance of programmed tasks by field workers, but it requires also the making of judgmental decisions in seeking information and assessing the client's circumstances, and often the formulation of recommendations to head office.

It would not be untrue to say that the decision-making process in the Family Benefits program is highly centralized. Not only is the final decision for each case of a large case load made by head office personnel, but head office plays an important part as well in the pre-finalization stages. A significant number of cases are referred initially to Queen's Park and these are referred to the field by the Assistant Deputy's Office for action, where they are given top priority. These cases are afforded a privileged time frame and together with other special investigations influence the time frame of normal applications. (Time-frame is discussed farther below.) Head office also shares with the field responsibility for obtaining information necessary to making decisions, namely information from certain provincial offices - Registrar-General, Canada Pension Plan, Unemployment Insurance, etc. Finally, before making decisions as to eligibility and amount of allowance, head office personnel have to be satisfied that the documentation and information for each case is complete. This may lead to directives for further work by field staff. In other words, head office decision personnel share with Regional Administrators and field supervisors the controlling and supervising functions.

Field staff who feel that a decision not to grant an allowance is wrong can appeal the case to the Branch, that is they can ask for reconsideration. The request needs to be accompanied by a statement of reasons and, if possible, by further information. The field worker can, therefore, to some extent act as an internal ombudsman of first appeal. Applicants or recipients can also appeal decisions to the Board of Review.

Field workers attend Board hearings to provide information. They do not act as counsel for appellants but it is possible for them to interpret or state an appellant's position if the appellant is inarticulate. The field worker's role, therefore, in the decision process need not end with the application stage. He can be very much involved in the determination stage.

There is wide-spread opinion among regional administrators, field supervisors, and field workers that decision making in Family Benefits should be decentralized - that responsibility for determining eligibility and allowances should be delegated in whole or in part to regional offices though not necessarily the present regional offices. Before setting out the reasons advanced for this proposal, however, certain other characteristics of decision making in Family Benefits need to be examined.

(1) Discretionary Aspects

In some programs, decision making is largely 'cut and dried'. Decisions follow automatically once certain specifically prescribed conditions have been ascertained. The decisions are in effect programmed ahead of time in the Act or regulations. In other programs, decision making requires discretion and judgment. It is not a matter of foregone conclusions. The Family Benefits program is based upon a complex set of conditions and rules. These have been established in part to reduce the element of individual judgment. But there are at the same time various discretionary areas in the Act. Family Benefits decision making, therefore, possesses both these attributes. This has implications for the respective functions of field and head office. Programmed decision making is more readily decentralized than judgmental decision making. Judgmental decision making on the other hand, if exercised at head office, will depend upon recommendations of those at the scene, e.g. field staff, who in a sense have a monopoly on knowledge of the case. Recommendatory decisions become important.

Field workers interviewed felt that the majority of cases (one said 90%) in Family Benefits are 'cut and dried'. They can predict fairly accurately what the decisions will be. For these cases, centralization creates, in their opinion, unnecessary expense of time and effort. At the same time, it is clear that cases involving discretion are frequent enough to make good decision making with regard to them of vital importance in program administration. Bad decision making could imperil the Act. The quality of recommendatory decisions coming from the field are, therefore, important to good service delivery. Some field supervisors and field workers recognize this. They realize that they can in some kinds of cases have impact upon the final decisions. Some field workers do not seem to recognize this, they felt their job is primarily a form filling one. But in fact field tasks do provide scope for initiative and judgment.

Generally it would appear to have been the policy of the Family Benefits Branch not to overburden the field with detailed directions to cover the various kinds of situations arising in discretionary areas. Firstly, it has been felt that this would render the program overly rigid. Secondly, it is not possible to cover all kinds of situations in directives - there are too many possible combinations of circumstances. Thirdly, field workers should be left scope to make the best possible case they can for applicants and recipients. Field staff should not become public assistance lawyers and 'go-by-the-book' bureaucrats. Field staff have responded differently to this policy. Some, recognizing that this is the policy, respond vigorously and to the extent that case loads permit devote energy to case presentation. Others don't seem to be aware of the general approach and complain that policies are not clear,



that if policies are changed they are the last to know, etc. Perhaps there has been some failure of communication on the Branch's part. Perhaps there has been some fault of communication in the regions. One worker in a regional office felt he was more tuned to the Branch than his colleagues in sub-offices. Perhaps emphasis on social service has led some field staff to downgrade their role in the public assistance system. The bureaucratic complications of public assistance administration, which they tend to blame on centralization, reinforces this attitude.

Specifically, discretionary areas in Family Benefits administration have two origins: (i) The Act and Regulations give the Director specified or implied authority for judgmental decisions in certain cases or circumstances. He may delegate this authority if he wishes. (ii) Certain terms and conditions in the Act leave room for judgment in their application to specific cases.

With regard to the first category, the Director of Family Benefits may under Section 8 recommend to the Governor-in-Council that an allowance be paid to a person in need who is not among the eligible categories of Section 7 (i.e. Mothers with dependent children, the blind or disabled, etc.) The Director may also exercise his discretion in certain matters pertaining to the residence, institutionalization and the fiscal resources of applicants or recipients, e.g. assets and property. The Branch has developed general policies to govern decision making in these areas but has not, for reasons above, attempted to detail them in directives to the field. There are certain areas where the Director exercises an implied discretion because the Act does not detail what should be done. Is suitable employment available to an applicant or recipient? Should an unmarried mother be required to seek maintenance from a putative father? Should a deserted wife be required to seek a court order for maintenance? Up to what amount and for what reasons should shelter repairs be paid for? In such areas as these the Director calls for recommendations from the field. Guidelines in these areas have been issued to the field but their generality has caused frustration in some quarters. Some field staff feel that the Branch is ambivalent for example with regard to declarations of paternity. They make recommendations as requested and then are asked to reconsider.

The second category - definitions in the Act that require interpretation - includes the application to specific cases of such terms as disabled, permanently unemployable, foster mother, deserted wife. In these cases, eligibility or otherwise is often not a foregone conclusion and field inputs can be important. In considering applications on the ground of disability or unemployability, the Medical Advisory Board and the Director consider not only the medical report from the field, but the layman's report from the field worker as well.

(2) The importance of uniformity

Both social justice and the political process require that decision making in Family Benefits be uniform throughout the province. This is difficult to achieve in programs such as Family Benefits where judgmental decision making is an important element. It is a major reason for centralization of Family Benefits decision making. Field staff, as will be noted below, argue that it does not make centralization necessary, at least to its present degree. But past experience with decentralized decision making in the former Mother's Allowances program renders the Branch anxious on this point. The field argues, however, that centralization in the interests of uniformity, makes the system rigid and unresponsive to individual needs and circumstances. The former Director of the Family Benefits Branch might argue the opposite. Decentralization would necessitate the proliferation of detailed directives and memos in the interests of uniformity in discretionary areas. The system could become more manualized, more rigid. Through centralization, on the other hand, liberality and flexibility can be combined with uniformity. The argument is continued further below.

(3) The decision milieu

The Family Benefits program is administered in an environment that is politically sensitive, controversial and potentially volcanic. It seems to be a characteristic of Ontario political culture that dissatisfactions and complaints are articulated via politicians or interest groups at the centre, that is at Queen's Park. The response to centralized feed back is centralized decision making, because this strengthens the program managers capacity to deal quickly with and control as best he can the caprices of the environment. At any rate, it has been an important factor in Family Benefits administration.

(4) Time Frame

The time involved in making decisions is usually an important attribute of program operation. The general norm is that decisions should be made in as short a time as is consistent with correctness and this certainly applies to programs such as Family Benefits, which provide assistance to the needy. The time frame for Family Benefits is governed by legislative stipulation and administrative considerations. Benefits are paid monthly and this means that the month is the administrative time unit. The Family Benefits Act states that entitlement commences at the beginning of the month first following the month of application and that payment begin at the end of the first month of entitlement. Clearly it is not the intention of the Act to meet emergency needs. Persons in critical circumstances at time of application must seek General Welfare Assistance from their municipality of residence while awaiting decision as to their eligibility for Family Benefits. Field workers interviewed agreed, however, that the administrative process results in a time span usually well in excess of the statutory minimum. Firstly, caseloads in



the field do not permit immediate action on requests for applications. Applicants usually have to wait for 10 days to 3 weeks for the field worker to visit. Secondly, the gathering of necessary documents by field worker or applicant can be prolonged; sometimes applicants are reluctant to provide them. Thirdly, the transmittal of documents through the mail to head office can be time consuming. Field staff in Toronto regional office insisted that ten days can elapse between the time an application leaves a field worker's desk and the time it arrives at a calculators desk at head office. At head office, branch personnel likewise have heavy workloads and applications arriving cannot be dealt with immediately. Frequently further information is required from the field; some applications or requests require consideration by special bodies - the Medical Advisory Board, Property Committee. As a result of these factors, a period in excess of 3 months may pass before final decision or action is taken. For new applicants, this usually does not create hardship since they are on General Welfare Assistance. Many, however, dislike being on welfare; it means frequently exposing themselves to the unwelcome administrative processes of small municipalities. Sometimes applicants will have assets in an amount acceptable to Family Benefits but not to their municipality. They must, therefore, expend assets to a degree not intended by the Family Benefits Act. The main complaint of field staff, however, is the time taken to effect changes in benefits when recipients' circumstances change. Slowness in response here can mean that an applicant can suffer loss of income for several months or can be subject to a large overpayment. This was an almost universal complaint of field workers. It was a problem that could be solved they felt by decentralization of decision making to regional offices.

The extent to which decentralization would in fact speed up decision making would depend on various other factors including the regional structure to which it was decentralized (e.g. 23 regions or 6 regions), the organization of the work (e.g. would field workers do budgetting or would decision units be dispersed to the field?), cheque issuing and control procedures, audit procedures (pre-audit or post audit) and the resources available. Staff shortages slow decision making no matter how it is structured. It should not be assumed that with decentralization that stresses and strains in the system occasioned by time factors would automatically disappear. Nor should time be the only value taken into account in considering the structure of decision making. Here, in summary, the following factors are noted with regard to the time frame in Family Benefits. (i) As far as is known, the Branch has not set any specific norms or goals for time spans in decision making. This has probably not been possible because of rapidly increasing caseloads and less rapidly increasing staff. But it might be a useful exercise to establish a norm and then estimate the staff and other resources required to realize it. Such a norm would also provide a criteria for assessing present procedures.



(ii) The present time frame would not be possible without G.W.A. Family Benefits administration in good part rests upon it. Some field staff question the wisdom of this - it involves duplication of effort in the overall provincial income maintenance system, it complicates service delivery to clients. It is a matter which deserves some attention.

(iii) While centralization tends to support the system with regard to uniformity and discretionary decision making, that is, it tends to resolve the stresses and strains in the system that can be created by these attributes, it appears to exacerbate the stresses and strains occasioned by considerations of time.

(5) The amount of decision making

The Family Benefits caseload as of October, 1972, was 91,645. (On March 31, 1969, it was 62,383.) The Branch has been experiencing an application rate of approximately 2,800 per month. It has also been handling some 10,000 changes per month in recipient circumstances and benefits. Thus the field staff and the Branch have been having to handle some 13,000 benefit decisions per month. To cope with this heavy strain, there is a field staff of some 294 full-time or part-time field workers, 21 field supervisors and 23 regional administrators and an establishment at Branch head office of approximately 225 decision making clerks and supervisors, plus 40-50 file clerks.

The question arises whether a load of operational decision making of this size, entailing such a large establishment, is appropriately exercised at head office, particularly when the fact finding part of the process has to be carried out in the field for which purpose a well-developed field structure already exists. The general trend in public administrative theory at the present is that it is not appropriate on two grounds. (1) It burdens head office with details of operational decision making to the disadvantage of program and administrative policy making (planning tends to become crisis planning) and (2) At a certain scale the system becomes dysfunctional - unnecessary time is spent on the preparation, movement, tracking down of reports, memos, files; communication channels become complicated and overloaded. The two large bureaucracies of field and head office tend to organize work and develop procedures to meet internal necessities and develop in contrary directions. A more detailed study than this of Family Benefits would be required to ascertain to what extent these theoretical predictions have been realized in program administration. Field staff seem to feel generally that they have, that the program has reached a size where a centralized decision making structure is ceasing to be viable. It has become internally cumbersome and externally out of tune with public and client expectations. (I have been engaged, reported one field worker, in 6 months of memo exchanging with the Branch on a case that resulted in a \$5 change in benefit.) If this sort of situation is prevalent, then the system begins to appear irrational to field worker and client.

Decentralization can solve the diseconomies of bigness, but it can create diseconomies of smallness. Also, of course, efficiency depends in part upon the technology used. It is understood, for example, that the calculation of benefits is to be computerized. This might ease some of the problems of bigness.

(6) Financial Administration

The structure of decision making in Family Benefits has been influenced by certain administrative and fiscal control policies governing the spending of money by the Ontario government. One of these is that expenditure of funds should be accomplished through a division of labour. The person who deals with the client should not decide the benefit; the benefit-decider should not write the cheque; and auditing should be done by someone else again. This has had a centralizing effect upon Family Benefits administration. With some exceptions, cheques are issued by Treasury, and Treasury is not dispersed. Without a basic change in the government's policies of fiscal administration, cheque issuance is not likely to be decentralized. The question, therefore, arises as to whether the benefits claimed for decentralization could be fully realized if payment remains centralized. It could reduce time involved in decision making but it might lengthen the time involved in order processing and cheque issuing.<sup>1)</sup> It might be possible perhaps to give regions advance accounts for the issuing of first cheques to new recipients or first cheques following a change in benefits, Treasury taking over when the new benefits are on stream.

Auditing has been a centralizing factor in Family Benefits administration. It is understood that until recently ministry auditing has been pre-auditing. This has meant that Audit Services has been involved in operational decision making. The system is now being changed to post-audit. This will be more permissive of decentralization. However, if decentralization is to occur, advantages would accrue if Audit Services has regional staff. This would also be of advantage to ministry responsibilities in Municipal Welfare Administration. The presence of federal auditors has also been a centralizing influence. Centralized decision making eases problem-solving in discretionary areas, permitting expeditious responses to federal probes and questions. All-in-all, fiscal control measures tend to support a centralist and cautious approach to program decision making.

(7) Decision making methods and instruments

Decision making in Family Benefits has entailed the use of one statutory Board, The Medical Advisory Board, and several Branch Committees to advise the Director on certain kinds of cases

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1) As noted below, field staff of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Branch do make certain "money" decisions. But nevertheless considerable time elapses before the money materializes.



or situations. The Medical Advisory Board determines whether or not applicants are disabled, within the meaning of the Act, or permanently unemployable. The use of one central Board is conducive to consistency in a difficult area of decision making. If decision making was decentralized, regional Medical Advisory Boards would need to be established or else the regulations so amended as to dispense with such a body. This would place responsibility upon the private practitioners who complete the medical reports of applicants. The difficulties of decentralizing socio-medical decision making are recognized by some field staff. One felt that perhaps medical cases should continue to go to head office.

Advisory staff committees dealt with such matters as repairs, the determination of age in the absence of documentary proof, property transfers, marital status. The use of committees indicates complexity in decision making. Whether, however, the Committee is an instrument that can be used to advantage in decentralized program decision making is problematical. Divergent committees are more difficult to cope with than divergent individuals.

(8) Technology

Cheque issuing is computerized. This means that several functions important in service delivery - the handling of computer rejections, the reconciliation of computer output with original orders - are performed at head office. If calculation of benefits was computerized, these functions would become more complicated. The computer, however, need not affect the location of decision making. It is indifferent to where its instructions are formulated. Terminals in regional offices would greatly speed up decision making and processing in a decentralized system, but would entail the locating of trained staff in the regional offices.

(9) Client relationships

The objects of administration, it is sometimes held, should determine where decisions are made. Decisions about things, e.g. public works, can perhaps be centralized but decisions about services to people should be decentralized. This, it is claimed, renders the agency a more tangible personalized entity to the client and prevents time gaps, splits and impersonalism in problem solving. It makes it possible to adapt decision making to local needs and circumstances; clients will not feel they are captives of red tape or subject to what might appear to be the whims of an impersonal, distant bureaucracy.



The extent to which these considerations apply to public assistance administration needs careful examination. Two comments are offered here. The first concerns the type of relationships that field staff and field offices should have with clients. While decentralization would bring the bureaucracy closer to the client, it could at the same time render the field bureaucratic. Decision-making in public assistance should combine understanding and compassion with objectivity and rationality. The present system in Family Benefits in part separates these two elements. By placing responsibility for objective and uniform decision making at Queen's Park, it permits the field to develop a closer identification with client needs, it gives them scope to act, to some extent, to represent clients in their dealings with the Branch. This factor is rendered important by the Ministry's present philosophy of public assistance administration, namely that the program be administered in a manner that is respectful of client's rights, and not condescending or punitive, trustful of their integrity and not inquisitorial, and responsive to their needs rather than their characters. The modern field worker is trained to listen, to understand, to become involved. What pattern of decision making is most conducive to realizing these ideals of service? If workers are to be emotionally involved, what should be their role in determining the money relationship? Regional Administrators agree generally that field workers should not make money decisions. These could be made, however, by separate decision units in the regional offices. This proposal merits consideration. What impact would it have, however, upon the stance of the regional office as a whole in its approach to clients? Would it lead to increased regulations and directives to control decision making? Would economies of scale mean that decision units would serve regions larger than the service regions? If so, might not decision making still be distant from the client?

The second comment pertains to adapting decision making to local needs. There seems to be some confusion in the field on this point. What is often meant when this value is argued is that rates of benefit should not be provincially uniform but should reflect regional variations in living costs. What is involved here is a change in policy, not in operational decision making. The two, of course, are connected. If benefit schedules were regionalized, then to some extent the problem of uniformity becomes one of regional uniformity and could become logically a regional responsibility. But, of course, need is only one part of eligibility. The other aspect - what categories of needy people should be eligible - cannot be regionalized.

The relationship, therefore, between the structure of decision making on the one hand and the ministry-worker-client relationship on the other, is complex in public assistance. Generalizations need to be carefully examined.

(10) Field Motivation and Morale

It is something of a truism in field administration that the delegation of decision-making responsibility to the field creates a greater sense of responsibility in field staff, raises the quality of field operations, promotes more involvement in and identity with the Ministry as a whole. Removal of decision-making narrows the challenges to which workers can respond. This is a powerful argument. It must be considered in this Ministry, particularly in light of the fact that it is recruiting and obtaining for positions at all levels in the field, staff who have more education and higher aspirations and who are more policy oriented and goal oriented than in the past. There is a connection between a ministry's long term goals for U.H.R. and its decision-making processes. The two should not be considered in isolation.

As noted earlier, Family Benefits field workers do have considerable scope for decision-making in their dealings with clients and in the formulation of assessments and recommendations for head office. The social service aspects of their work also give considerable room for self-directed task performance. There is again some confusion in the field on this point. Some field staff seem to feel that the absence of authority to make certain decisions means lack of opportunity to influence decisions, to set task goals, to be self-directive. It springs from a simplistic approach to the decision-making process. And stress on decision-making alone tends to obscure the many dimensions and responsibilities of the work itself. There are, however, one or two factors that tend to limit the realization of the full potentials of field work in Family Benefits. One is workloads. Field workers commonly report that they do not have time to develop all their work possibilities. The clerical and mechanical chores necessary in servicing a large caseload are overly time-consuming. Secondly, some field workers (whether only a small minority or otherwise is not known) feel that stress is laid at head office upon quantity of work - number of visits, number of applications completed, rather than upon quality. Their weekly and monthly reports are purely quantitative and presumably, therefore, the larger the quantities the better. And after all, the main job is to keep waiting lists down and get applications completed. Field workers do respond differently to their situation. One field worker reported that some of her colleagues reported a very large number of visits. "They must be in and out very fast. I like to take more time, but I'm not sure I get much credit for it at head office." The writer does not know how much attention has been given by the Field Services Branch to norms for task performance. It is a matter of importance to field morale.



(11) Self Sufficiency

Decision making in any program is also influenced by the degree to which it is affected by the decisions of other agencies. Family Benefits is related in this way to a great range of agencies and programs. These include a considerable array of social security programs, domestic and foreign, which provide income to many Family Benefits recipients. When the pensions, awards, allowances, of any of these change, e.g. W.V.A., C.P.P., foreign pensions, then the allowances of those Family Benefits recipients who receive them must also be changed. This problem cannot be easily dealt with in public assistance administration because, firstly, the changes are often unpredictable, require quick response, and involve mobilizing existing resources on a temporary basis. The problem can be most expeditiously coped with, perhaps, when files are centralized. It is a centralizing influence in administration. At any rate, the procedures to be followed would need to be carefully worked out if decentralization took place. It should be noted that changes in 'outside' benefits usually result in increases in the incomes of Family Benefits recipients and require, therefore, unwelcome decreases in allowances. Letters of explanation must go out not only to recipients but to M.P.P.'s.

The Family Benefits program is also inter-related in a number of ways with General Welfare Assistance. As noted earlier, applicants rely on G.W.A. during the application stage. Rental supplements are also paid under G.W.A. to Family Benefits recipients. To a considerable degree, Family Benefits administration uses G.W.A. as a means of adapting benefits to regional variations in shelter costs. Also, the F.B. benefit schedule does not, apart from repairs to houses, provide for non-recurring or special needs, e.g. drugs, dentures, prosthetics, appliances. Instead these are provided for under G.W.A. which means again that applicants' needs are subject to decision making by municipal welfare authorities. Clients' needs, in this area, and the consequent relations with municipalities are dealt with at the regional level. This aspect of service delivery, which is an important one, is therefore decentralized. Though meeting these needs is not a legal obligation, field staff, by and large, feel morally obligated to see that they are met. If municipalities do not co-operate, they attempt to secure assistance from other sources - service clubs, voluntary agencies.

The rationale for excluding special needs from Family Benefits is probably that they are non-recurring and local and, therefore, better dealt with by a program such as G.W.A. which is intended to meet emergencies, rather than by Family Benefits which is a program of long term assistance. It may also be partly financial; but the removal from the program of crucial assistance to persons for whose economic welfare the Ministry has assumed responsibility is surely hard to justify.



As noted elsewhere in this report, the Ministry depends considerably upon other agencies for the delivery of a broad range of social services to Family Benefits recipients and their families. The number and nature of these agencies varies greatly from region to region with the result that decision making as to the respective functions of Ministry social service staff and of the agencies in serving recipients, and as to the general emphasis and direction of social services, is decentralized to regional offices. This is explored further in the discussion of the Social Services Consulting Unit. Here it will be noted that as Family Benefits administration has become more client oriented, social service, i.e. assistance to clients in solving social problems has become more central to the fieldworker's task. Many field workers feel, in fact, that this is what the job is all about, although they recognize that getting money to eligible applicants and dealing with the income maintenance aspects of their caseload is the first responsibility. Many feel frustrated because the latter does not leave time for the former. Social service, of course, calls for continual decision making - judgmental decisions as to the nature and seriousness of the problems presented by clients, performance decisions as to how to proceed.

#### SUMMARY

The above has reviewed the pattern of decision making in Family Benefits administration with particular reference to the responsibilities respectively of head office and field staff. With present governmental interest in the decentralization of program decision making, this is the aspect of decision making which is receiving most attention and the one considered perhaps most important. But there are other attributes, requirements or values pertaining to decision making in any given program which also need to be considered. Decision making in Family Benefits has been discussed in light of these. It would appear that present arrangements are supportive of some administrative values but less so of others.

The present Director and Assistant Director of Family Benefits favour continuation of present centralized decision making. By contrast Regional Administrators consulted, and field workers and their supervisors, favour decentralization. Arguments pro and con are as follows:

(1) Centralization is favoured as being most conducive to and perhaps necessary for uniform decision making. Field personnel argue, however, that decentralization and uniformity are not incompatible. Uniformity could be maintained through post audit procedures whereby carefully selected samples of

cases from each region could be reviewed periodically for consistency. Good communications also support uniformity. One Regional Administrator felt that lack of communication between head office and field during the period when Mothers Allowances was decentralized was a major reason for the divergencies that developed. There were, during the period 1959-63, no meetings that he could recall between administrators at head office and regional administrators around problems in program administration. Today Regional Administrators meet with Branch Directors more often. He had attended more meetings in the past 3 years than in the previous eight. Regular meetings make it possible, he felt, to clarify policy issues, discuss problem cases, develop common approaches. Some field staff felt that perhaps some kinds of cases might continue to go to head office; for example, medical cases involving the Medical Advisory Board.

It should be noted that some field staff claim that centralized decision making is not always uniform. One Regional Administrator claimed there was too large a span of control at head office for uniformity.

(2) The Director and Assistant Director argue that centralization makes for the most economic and flexible use of decision staff, particularly with the new digit system; work assignments can be readily adjusted to caseload changes in the different regions. Decentralization would freeze staff inside regional boundaries. Field staff recognize that the present 23 regions may not offer a suitable structure for decentralization. They might need to be grouped into larger regions (5 to 10 in number). Field work would continue to be done at the present regional level (or its future counterpart); decision units would be located at the higher regional level. (One former Regional Administrator, now retired, who favoured decentralization proposed that decision making be at the service level. Monitoring and auditing for consistency would take place at the higher regional level).

(3) It is also argued that decentralization of decision making would not be of particular advantage unless the issuing of benefits was likewise decentralized. This problem has been discussed above. It was there suggested that regions might be given authority either through cheque-writing on head office advance accounts, but preferably through regional advance accounts, to put new or changed allowances in pay.

(4) Finally, there is fear in the Family Benefits Branch that decentralization would result in a deterioration in the quality of decision making. There seem to be two somewhat contradictory grounds for this fear. One is that some regional administrators lack the necessary interest in public assistance administration and do not pay sufficient attention to it. Their



major interests lie in community organization and social service. It would, therefore, be risky to give them responsibility for it. The other fear is that the field is very interested in public assistance but overly client-oriented. Field personnel do not have sufficient respect for the legislation to be trusted with its interpretation. These fears, whether justified or not, are symptomatic of an attitudinal quality in Family Benefits that should be corrected. Further, even if true, they do not provide an argument for centralization. They are an argument for returning public assistance administration to a central place in regional operations. One possible way of doing this is to delegate to the field some responsibility for decision making.

There appears to be a tendency in the Ministry at present for head office and field to make sweeping and somewhat dubious generalizations about one another. For example, field personnel are prone to say that present procedures in Family Benefits administration serve the administrative system and not the client, or that decision-makers at head office deal with paper and not with people and, therefore, can't always make humane decisions. Generalizations of this sort, of course, are unfair. With regard to the first, an administrator can readily answer that though the client's interest should be served, some procedures are necessary to serve the public interest as well, and that other procedures might be required to maintain the system as a whole so that it can continue to serve the client. The second generalization is more symptomatic of the 'anti-paper' psychology to be found in field personnel generally than it is a reasoned assessment of the system itself.

The arguments of the field against centralization are that it is dysfunctional with regard to time span, administrative effort and client relations. These arguments have been examined above. Some field staff also argue that the present pattern of decision making complicates relations with municipalities which complain that they are being forced to support applicants during a waiting period sometimes unduly prolonged. Some municipalities complained about having to advance funds while misdirected or lost cheques were being traced or replaced. Replacement cheques can now be issued on the spot in the regional offices and this problem, therefore, has been solved.

An argument frequently advanced by field staff is that clients are more knowledgeable and sophisticated than in the past and have higher expectations regarding service delivery. Decentralization would facilitate meeting these expectations. If files were located in the regional offices, it would be easier to solve problems quickly; work-flows would be more amenable to control. "If I had the files here," said one Regional Administrator, whose region was still primarily oriented to income maintenance, "we would have a better chance of keeping on top of the job and we could give better service."



## II) GENERAL WELFARE ASSISTANCE

The Ministry is responsible for the granting of General Welfare Assistance in the unorganized territories of the North. Unlike the Family Benefits program, General Welfare Assistance is intended in part to meet emergency needs. Immediate response to applications and quick decision-making are, therefore, governing factors in delivery of service. Thus, decisions as to the eligibility of applicants and the amount of assistance to be granted in each case are made in the field. Cases include Family Benefits beneficiaries in unorganized territories seeking supplementary aid or special assistance. Applications are taken by field workers; eligibility is determined and allowance calculated by General Welfare Assistance decision units, manned by clerks, in the regional offices. Field workers may issue vouchers or request the regional office to issue a cheque in emergency situations. Statutory responsibility for General Welfare Assistance in unorganized territories falls upon the Regional Administrator who, in fact, acts as a local welfare authority. As such, he authorizes payments to Homes for the Aged for the maintenance of residents therein from unorganized territories; he may authorize the provision of visiting homemakers or nurses to persons in unorganized territory.

The administration of G.W.A. involves six regional offices and extends, of course, over a very large area. The question arises as to whether it has been possible to maintain a desirable uniformity in decision-making. The Assistant Director of the M.W.A. Branch reported that, in fact, considerable divergence both in procedures and in decision-making did develop. A number of measures have or are being instituted to ensure that people in the same situation get the same assistance. These measures have included visits to the regional offices by the Assistant Director of M.W.A.; the holding of two day seminars with budget clerks; the circulation of policies by memoranda; the use of standardized letters to applicants; continual telephone contact with regional administrators. It is planned further to employ one officer who would visit regional offices, give consultation and do post audit. It is the opinion of the Assistant Director of M.W.A. that uniformity in procedures and decision-making has practically been achieved.

III) SOCIAL SERVICES TO FAMILY BENEFITS AND G.W.A. BENEFICIARIES

Prior to October, 1972, casework and other supportive services to Family Benefits recipients, individually or in groups, were provided by caseworkers of the Family Services Branch located in some of the regional offices. These field staff reported to and worked under the supervision of the Director of this Branch, not the Regional Administrator. In October, 1972, the Branch was transformed from a program operating unit to a Social Services Consulting Unit. The field social workers were transferred to Regional Administration and to the line direction and supervision of the regional administrators. The intent was to permit a more effective integration of the social service component in regional services and the utilization and deployment of social workers in accordance to the peculiar needs and circumstances of the various regions in which they worked.

In this area of field work, key decisions in service delivery are the day-to-day professional decisions made by field staff in the performance of their duties. This, by its nature, is decentralized, governed by professional social work standards and perhaps, also, by general Ministry approaches and philosophy of service. At the time of this study it appeared that such service delivery decisions as to when and with whom a case-work relationship should be established or terminated, when and how a client self-help group should be established, were made in the field. The key issue with regard to respective responsibilities of head office and field lay in program planning - the establishment of regional objectives for social services; the delineation, in the light of overall community resources, of appropriate ministry responsibilities and functions in a particular region. Here the stress seemed to be upon head office - field collaboration in regionalized planning, with the field taking the initiative in developing proposals.

With the integration of social workers into regional administration, it was proposed also that Field Worker II's become social service staff. There is considerable variation among regions in the use of Field Worker II's. Some, for example, are assigned to special investigations. One regional administrator expressed concern at the prospect of an "across-the-board" assignment of all Field Worker II's to social service. Some he felt had not been promoted to this level because of skill in this type of work.

A trend is developing, observable in several regions, towards the team approach in social service, to case review and service delivery decisions by "committee". In St. Catharines

for example, a social service unit comprised of the Social Worker (or casework co-ordinator), the field services supervisor and the Field Worker II meets every two weeks to review cases and decide how they should be handled. Depending on the nature of the problem presented, a case might be referred to another agency or to a special Field Worker I for assistance in budgeting, or to the Field Worker II (e.g. re trusteeship) or to the social worker. The team provided for shared group supervision with regard to all client services except the provision of Family Benefits. Toronto is similarly trying to integrate the three levels of staff-field Worker I, Field Worker II and Social Workers into units. There are, it is felt in Toronto regional office, three streams of clients corresponding to three levels of complexity of problems and, fortuitously, corresponding to the three levels of staff. These are the "easy stream", the "middle stream" and the "tough stream". (The colloquialisms are the writer's.) The Field Worker I, with whom clients first come into contact, can spot the clients belonging to the easy stream, but has difficulty in assigning clients to either the middle stream or the tough stream. This occasioned difficulties in relationship with social workers in the past. But by involving the Social Worker and the Field Worker II in the decision, this problem is solved.

This approach to decision-making in social service represents a departure from previously established practice, at least in some regions. The social worker, it had been held, should be aloof from and not identified with those administering financial benefits. This, it was felt, was important to the development of an uninhibited casework relationship. If a client had problems he did not wish known by the field worker, he could discuss them in confidence with the caseworker. The new model, by contrast, integrates the process of service to the client. It also brings to the fore an important issue in social service to public assistance recipients. Should the Ministry, in the interests of equity in service delivery, attempt to develop criteria for the guidance of local units in deciding what service should be given to what clients? This would seem to be necessary, at least for evaluation of the effectiveness of service on a provincial basis.

As for the functions specifically of regional social workers, the following were noted in regions visited:

- (i) Case consultation to field workers and supervisors, without direct involvement in cases.
- (ii) Group work with clients, i.e. encouragement and assistance in establishing self-help groups; assistance to and liaison with Family Benefits Associations. In some regions, field workers and Supervisors also do this.



- (iii) Casework to clients referred by Regional Administrator, supervisor or field worker or as selected by the Social Worker. There seems to be somewhat less emphasis upon sustained casework than in the past and more upon "crisis intervention".
- (iv) Liaison and consultation with other agencies; the handling of referrals for professional service.
- (v) The surveying of community resources, identifying what is available and what is not.
- (vi) Research into client problems and needs.
- (vii) Involvement in community programs, e.g. stints of duty in multi-service agencies, community organization in public housing.
- (viii) Specialized work on contract - e.g. in Toronto to work with recipients in ethnic groups.
- (ix) Experimental projects, e.g. combined self-help group and day nursery program (Thunder Bay).

As professional social workers become involved in integrated service to clients, the question arises as to their relationship with field workers vis-a-vis the field worker's supervisor. No difficulties seem to have arisen as yet. In Timmins, a procedure has been developed whereby new field workers take all problems first to their supervisor. Experienced field workers, however, may take problems directly to the social worker.

#### IV) MUNICIPAL WELFARE ADMINISTRATION

This Ministry supervises and advises Ontario municipalities in the Administration of General Welfare Assistance. This it does through the Municipal Welfare Administration Branch and through field staff, known as field representatives, located in the regional offices and working under the supervision of regional administrators.

The tasks performed by field representatives are:

- (1) Examination of municipal welfare accounts to ensure that the benefits paid are in keeping with the Act;
- (2) Explanation and interpretation to municipalities of the legislation;
- (3) General consultation and extension services aimed at improving municipal welfare services and administration.

The first of these tasks is inspectorial but does not on the whole, it would appear, call for the exercise of individual judgment. The second task involves primarily the transmission of information. There are, however, 'gray' areas in the legislation and in the absence of a clear statement of policy the field representative may be called upon to exercise his judgment. He can, of course, seek guidance from his Regional Administrator or from the Municipal Welfare Administration Branch at Queen's Park. In one Regional Office, both the regional administrator and field representative felt that there was insufficient communication and direction from the Branch in these problem areas. Their colleagues in another region, however, did not feel that this was a problem. The field representative's role can be complicated by the fact that larger municipalities will sometimes take their problems directly to Queen's Park. Small municipalities, however, seek his assistance not only as to the eligibility of individual clients but as to the amount of allowance that should be paid. He gets involved in budgeting individual cases, that is in direct service decision-making. Field representatives have to be careful, however, not to be put in the position of decision-maker, of the guy who told the welfare administrator what to do. The third task, which is being given increasing emphasis by the Municipal Welfare Administration Branch is primarily a judgmental one. It involves decisions on tactics and approaches in dealing with welfare administrators, full-time and part time, and often with local politicians, both species often being unenthusiastic about General Welfare Assistance, if not overtly hostile.

The complexion of the field representative's work varies considerably from region to region, both with regard to the number of municipalities he has to deal with and the scope and complexity of the problems presented. In the St. Catharines region, there is but one municipal welfare department, that of the regional government of Niagara. In the Lindsay region there is a county welfare unit, two city departments and a county in

which General Welfare Assistance is still administered by the small constituent municipalities, mostly rural townships.

By and large field representatives are not professionally trained auditors and can have difficulty in coping with the more complex accounts and procedures of large regional or city welfare departments - particularly if these are computerized. One regional administrator expressed the opinion that his field representative, though able to deal reasonably effectively with small rural municipalities, could not properly handle the large city department. Nor, on the whole, are field representatives trained in public welfare administration and, therefore, not equipped to assess organization and procedures in county or city units. As a result, these functions have been assumed by head office specialists in the Municipal and County Administration Section of Municipal Welfare Administration. It is this group for example, not field representatives, which have provided Ministry services in the setting up of county welfare units. It is this group again, not the field representative, which upon request of a city or town, will conduct a review of its social services. In a sense this field position is being by-passed by modernization and amalgamation in local welfare. Municipal Welfare Administration Branch is at present proposing to upgrade through training and intensified head office consultation the field representative position and his knowledge and skills.

Nevertheless, field representatives still play a useful role as salesmen and interpreters of Municipal Welfare Assistance to small municipalities. It was this aspect of their work that field representatives interviewed emphasized. Most welfare administrators in smaller municipalities are part-time. Often the job is done by the municipal clerk. They train new administrators. If office secretaries are involved, they train them also in taking applications or making home visits. The field representative in Kirkland Lake stressed the importance of this. In some regions they meet with municipal councils. There seemed general consensus among field representatives interviewed that the biggest part of their work was public relations - maintaining good relationships with municipalities, changing their attitudes, solving problems before they happen, reducing the work of the Board of Review. In the rural areas, relations are developed on an interpersonal rather than inter-organizational basis. In Kirkland Lake, the field representative has successfully organized a meeting of the 26 welfare administrators of Temiskaming District. An ongoing committee has been established. Common policies and procedures are being developed.



In the Belleville regions all four counties have adopted county welfare. This means that the field representative travels much less, that he is called upon less for information and consultation. As a result he is able to act unofficially as an assistant administrator, to undertake special investigations, to assist field workers assess requests for repairs. Examining accounts, however, is still his major responsibility.

Because most field representatives are on the road a lot, they perforce work closely with Regional Administrators or field service supervisors where these exist. It is the Regional Administrator or supervisor who handles municipal calls for information or advice when the field representative is away.

One field representative mentioned two difficulties attendant upon his position. One was that he is granted no official authority in legislation as either inspector or consultant and this sometimes puts him in a difficult position. He has been treated badly at times. The other is that he is often regarded by municipalities as a general provincial government representative. He felt he needed more training and background in the overall system, if he was to respond properly.

One gets the impression that over the years the field representatives have been somewhat neglected both by the Field Services Branch and by Municipal Welfare Administration Branch. There seems to have been little in the way of ongoing training or development. They have only met once as a group - in October, 1971. The problem is - can this group be retrained and redirected to perform effectively the tasks of the future?

In summary, there is a division of function between head office and field in Municipal Welfare Administration. Decisions in the exercise of those functions performed in the field are made in the field. Responsibility for these rests with the Regional Administrators to whom field representatives report. The M.W.A. Branch has not been involved in an on-going staff way with field decision-making, a matter of present concern to it.

V) LEGAL AID

The Law Society of Upper Canada is responsible for the administration of legal aid and to this end appoints Area Directors in each county. They are usually practising lawyers doing legal aid part-time. The Area Directors are responsible for deciding on eligibility of applicants and arranging for the provision of the service. There are two criteria for eligibility -- legal and financial. The Area Director makes final decisions as to both. In deciding, however, upon financial eligibility, he depends upon reports on the circumstances of applicants and upon recommendations prepared and formulated by Legal Aid Assessment Officers employed by this Ministry. These field staff are located in the Ministry's regional or sub-offices and work under the line direction of the regional administrators.

Applicants go first to the area director's office where their legal eligibility is determined (certain types of action, e.g. libel, are not covered by the Act). The Ministry is not involved in initial intake. The Area Director's office informs the Ministry's legal aid field worker of eligible applicants, but it is the applicant's responsibility to arrange his interview with the field worker. The field worker is responsible for determining the applicant's income, assets and living expenses and on the basis of this determination advises the Area Director as to whether the applicant can pay for the legal costs involved in whole, in part, or not at all. (The estimated legal costs are on the form forwarded by the area director's office) They frequently recommend a monthly payment plan if the applicant could meet all or part of the costs in this way.

The advice tendered to the Area Director is usually accepted. The Ministry is, with regard to this aspect of eligibility, the de facto decision maker. And in the preponderance of cases the decision is made by field staff. Certain types of cases, however, are sent to the Head Office, Legal Aid Branch, for decision. These are cases involving bankruptcies, business income, or applicants with unusually high income. There seems, however, to be some variation in practice with regard to this. One worker reported that he sent no more than 2% of his cases to head office, though he could send up to 10%.

Organization of legal aid work varies somewhat from region to region. In Kirkland Lake, for example, each assessment officer makes his own recommendations to the area directors. In Lindsay, interviews are held and forms completed in sub-offices but 'decisioning' is done by one worker at the regional office. Again, in some regions arrangements have been made for interviewing to be done in the legal aid office rather than the ministry office, except where the two are in the same place. This is of considerable advantage to the client.

Decision making on financial eligibility in legal aid would appear to be, in most cases, relatively straightforward and uncomplicated. To the experienced worker, it can become mechanical and repetitive. The rules are straightforward and not many problems arise. One worker felt that the duties were "inconsequential" and should not be done by the Ministry. Fifty per cent of applicants qualified automatically, being on Family Benefits, G.W.A. or other form of income maintenance. Other workers interviewed wouldn't agree with this assessment. There are, it would appear, some areas for judgment. One worker reported that determination of living expenses involved judgment - should he use Family Benefit preadded budget or the applicant's own assessment of expenses or some combination of the two?<sup>1)</sup> Small businesses were often difficult - the facts were hard to get at. What about the income of the marginally or seasonally employed worker who expects to be working in the near future? A large number of single applicants were in this situation.

Legal aid workers discuss problem cases with their Regional Administrators; there does not seem to be very much consultation with head office of the Legal Aid Branch, but the Branch does monitor decision-making in the field. The Assistant Director reviews a sample of cases from each region annually prior to visiting the regional offices. The Branch, however, directs its attention to decisions made - not to interviewing techniques.

Legal aid field workers are expected, where appropriate, to assist applicants with social and personal problems, referring them, for example, to debt counselling or marriage counselling if these services are available. Advice in these areas can entrench on a lawyer's domain; one worker reported that he had been "in constant conflict" with lawyers. Another worker reported that referral of applicants for Family Benefits or General Welfare Assistance was frequent. If he is skillful, a legal aid worker can be helpful to applicants. One worker mentioned particularly young people in trouble for the first time. But opportunity for assistance is limited because the worker usually sees a client only once. Unlike Family Benefits, there is not continuing contact with the client or opportunity for follow up.

Several field workers reported that there were advantages to interviewing applicants in the Area Director's office. This permitted close relations with the Area Director or his secretary (usually very knowledgeable),

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1) Practise seems to vary in this regard from region to region.



the exchange of information and better decision-making. It also permitted fruitful working relations with duty counsel in the Courts. The question arises as to which is the best milieu for socio-economic decision-making in legal aid. In the opinion of the Director of the Legal Aid Branch, legal aid is a social service and this aspect of service is best located in a social service ministry where the needs of clients can be looked at as a whole. Yet one gets the impression from talking to field workers that the split in the system can create difficulties in communication, that the system operates best when the two sides work in proximity.

VI) VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

The Vocational Rehabilitation program entails the delivery of a broad range of services aimed at restoring disabled persons to pursue continually "at an optimum capacity" a "substantially gainful occupation". Such an occupation may include employment in the competitive labour market, the practise of a profession, self-employment, housekeeping and homemaking, farmwork, and sheltered or home-bound work of a financially remunerative nature. Any person who because of physical or mental impairment is incapable of pursuing regularly a substantially gainful occupation is disabled for the purposes of the Act. Services are not provided, however, if vocational rehabilitation, as a result of assessment, is not deemed possible.

Services provided to accomplish the above include:

(1) Vocational Rehabilitation Services to individuals.

These encompass income maintenance, counselling, assessment, rehabilitative therapy and restorative, education and training placement. These services are provided directly by the Ministry or are purchased from other agencies or practitioners.

(2) Resource Development Services to foster, co-ordinate and improve community resources for vocational rehabilitation. These include the payment of capital and operating grants to approved sheltered workshops or other vocational rehabilitation agencies and of consultative services to them.

The delivery of the above services entails decision making in a variety of areas requiring a considerable range of knowledge and skills. The respective responsibilities of head office and of field staff in the making of these decisions is reviewed below.

1) Vocational Rehabilitation Services to Individuals -

These are provided through a process that involves (a) Intake; (b) Provision of maintenance allowance; (c) Assessment; (d) Restorative Services; (e) Training, including placement for on-the-job training.

(a) Intake - This, of course, is a field responsibility. It involves initial decisions as to whether or not an applicant has a verifiable disability (e.g. age alone is not a disability) and as to an applicant's potential employability. Those obviously not able to be vocationally rehabilitated are screened out at the intake stage and perhaps referred to the Rehabilitation Foundation or other agency for non-vocational rehabilitation services. Most applicants are referred to the Branch by other agencies - hospitals, psychiatric facilities, schools, Canada Manpower. One of the functions of field staff is to develop their referral base, that is to inform and remind all potential referring agencies of the program and to maintain contact with them. The initial intake interview is considered

by the Branch to be of crucial importance in the rehabilitation process. Applicants come with their own aspirations for training and careers and the worker must counsel them as to their feasibility. It involves skill in counselling and a knowledge of the labour market. In the London region, intake is centralized and is done by the regional supervisor.

(b) Assessment - This involves providing or procuring various services for determining a client's aptitudes and capacities. They may include psychological testing, placement in a sheltered workshop, counselling, further medical or psychiatric evaluation. Field staff are responsible for assessment. They decide what services are required and have authority to purchase them. Where possible assessment is done in the client's community but if this is not possible they can authorize transportation to and room and board in another community as necessary. They negotiate the fees to be paid to workshops if these are used, though final decisions on these are made at head office. They determine the length of the assessment stage. It can be short or prolonged. If a workshop lacks the skills to provide a professional assessment, a field supervisor or counsellor may make the assessment from their observation of the client's progress and experience. One counsellor stated that he did not always agree with assessment reports. But he must include these along with his own in the final report.

(c) Maintenance Allowance - Under the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Act, clients may be paid maintenance allowances at a rate sufficient to bring their monthly income up to levels specified in the Act. These allowances are calculated by field counsellors and approved by regional supervisors. They are payable during both the assessment and training phases. Under the Act, however, the Director is responsible for determining allowances in certain cases; namely, unmarried clients under 18 living with their families, clients who are patients in a hospital or other institution approved by him and certain unmarried persons with no dependents. The Director is also responsible for appointing trustees for managing allowances where clients are incapable of handling their own affairs or are using their allowances other than for their own benefit.

(d) Restorative Services - Major restorative services are approved at Queen's Park by the Consultant on restoration on the basis of reports from the field. Field staff, however, can authorize minor restorative appliances or services or replacements and repairs.

(e) Vocational Training and Preparation - Following the Assessment Stage, a field counsellor prepares a comprehensive report on the client for head office and recommends a program to train and prepare the client for employment. The proposed program may include further education in the client's or other community, specific vocational training, work adjustment training



or training on the job. The plan is developed with the client who, if he disagrees, can insist on presenting his own. This is forwarded with field staff comment and recommendations. Report and proposals are reviewed by a Selection Committee at Queen's Park. A representative of the Federal Government sits on this Committee. The Selection Committee approves, rejects or perhaps modifies the field counsellor's recommendation. In the majority of cases it approves. The field's decisions are not the de facto final decisions. The Selection Committee is not a rubber stamp, but the proposals have an authoritative status.

Applicants can appeal the Committee's decision to the Director of Vocational Rehabilitation who, under the Act, has authority to determine the nature and extent of the vocational rehabilitation services necessary to meet his (the client's) needs. The applicant may further appeal to the Board of Review appointed under the Family Benefits Act.

Field staff have certain responsibilities with regard to the implementation of training programs. Perhaps the most important of these is placing clients for on-the-job training and securing the co-operation of employers in this regard.

2) Suspension or Cancellation of Services - The Director is responsible for suspending or cancelling rehabilitation services if in his opinion a client is not making satisfactory progress towards rehabilitation, is not benefitting from the service, is not availing himself of them or is failing to comply with the Act or regulations.

3) Resource Development Services - Decisions in grant administration are centralized. Rehabilitation agencies and workshops which they operate to which capital grants may be paid must be approved by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The capital grants themselves are approved by the Minister. Operating grants to workshops are made following approval by the Director of their safety procedures and sanitary facilities, of their program of services and of their admission policies. The director may also require a letter from the local fire chief attesting to compliance with fire laws and by-laws. The role of field staff is to advise agencies of required standards and to assist them in developing submissions for capital or operating grants. They make recommendations to the Director on suitability of workshops for grants and provide on-going consultative services to them. Field supervisors meet with Boards of workshops to review goals and activities. Field personnel have a general mandate to help develop rehabilitation resources generally - vocational and other. They sit on committee and work with client groups.

The pattern of decision making in vocational rehabilitation has been influenced by several factors. It is a federal-provincial program and in fact, as noted above, a

federal representative is involved directly in service decision making. It is a program, likewise, in which decision making is highly judgmental involving knowledge and skills at the professional level. It is also a program requiring knowledge and skill in several specialized areas. All of these factors exert a centralizing influence in decision making. Thus the professional and interdisciplinary nature of the program entails collective decision making and decision making committees are difficult to disperse, particularly if they have representatives from another level of government. The Branch has been expanding and expansion tends to be a centralizing factor. Directors are loathe to delegate program decision making to field corps that are comprised in good part of new people. It is the opinion of the former Director that overall quality of field staff is not quite high enough yet for full-delegation of decision making. Finally, of course, because of the judgmental nature of decision making, it is important to make provision for consistency. A central decision making committee is helpful in this regard. Also, when cases are sent to head office for final decision making, it (head office) has opportunity to assess field judgments and recommendations for consistency and quality. This could be done, of course, on a post audit basis. The judgmental nature of decision making, however, is such as to render the intake and assessment stages of crucial importance. There is considerable scope for the exercising of judgmental initiative by field staff.

As of October, 1972, the total caseload in Vocational Rehabilitation was 5,470. The average caseload per field counsellor, excluding supervisors, was 63.1) The number of cases coming to head office per month during 1972 was approximately 50 - 60. In the opinion of the former Director, this amount of decision making was not an undue burden on head office.

With regard to time span in Vocational Rehabilitation, field staff interviewed did not complain of undue delays in decision making, although vocational rehabilitation is not a speedy process. Delays in decision making are occasioned by two other factors however. Firstly, demands for service are outrunning staff resources in the field with the result that there are waiting lists and applicants may have to wait 4-6 weeks for their initial interview. Getting onto the system is a major problem. The former Director reports that in some other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States staff-client ratios in vocational rehabilitation programs are three times those in Ontario. Ideally, also, intake should take place in the agency of referral - the hospital, Canada Manpower, etc., but waiting lists do not permit this. Secondly, delays in centralized cheque issuing occasion difficulties in the field. One supervisor responded that the issuing of funds takes 10-14 weeks. This creates problems with companies who employ clients for on-the-job training. As a result, the Branch is losing some companies and the finding of placements is unduly complicated. Delays

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1) Although, as noted earlier, there was considerable variation in caseloads.



in receipt of maintenance allowances, of payments for restorative services, likewise create difficulties and hardships. Services though approved are a long time in materializing. This creates a bad Ministry image in the community. Time has to be spent in explaining the Ministry system to clients and agencies. Ministry appears to be slow moving and overly bureaucratic.

Though there are limitations on field decision making, service delivery does commence with intake. The assessment process involves field staff in providing service to applicants or in arranging services for them. Thus worker and client are engaged immediately in a service delivery relationship. This contrasts to Family Benefits where there is a hiatus between application and receipt of benefit. In Vocational Rehabilitation, field decisions initiate service delivery. This has advantages for field staff motivation and agency-client relationships, ameliorating some of the problems that seem to have arisen in these respects in Family Benefits.

The decision making process in Vocational Rehabilitation has been under consideration in the Branch. Mr. Amos thinks that final decisions re work adjustment training should be made in the field. Selection Committee by and large rubber-stamps these recommendations. They involve mainly a continuation of employment in sheltered workshops. Mr. Amos also feels that federal participation by means of the Selection Committee, in service delivery decision making is an anachronism. It is not to be found in federal-state rehabilitation programs in the United States. There, federal authorities do administrative reviews of state programs, examining such matters as waiting lists, staff qualifications, etc. They do not engage in program decision making. If a similar system could be established for Ontario, then providing the quality of field staff permitted, the Selection Committee could be disbanded and decision-making totally regionalized. Consistency of decision-making could be maintained through close communication and consultation and head office review of cases.

Field staff in Vocational Rehabilitation tend to have mixed feelings about the present pattern of decision-making. One counsellor was critical of the criteria used by the Selection Committee in making decisions. It tends to use past experience as a guide - that is, to approve or disapprove cases in the light of success or failure of similar cases in the past. Unique circumstances are not given the weight they should. As a result, the Committee has rejected proposals that he felt should have been accepted and vice versa. The same worker also noted that services required in rehabilitation were unevenly distributed throughout the province. If the services proposed for a client are not available in his community or region, then the program can move and maintain him for service elsewhere. Head office is equipped to assess field recommendations in the light of overall provincial services. This he felt was an advantage of the present system of decision making. But with a good information system, regional offices could develop a province-wide orientation in service delivery.



VII) DAY NURSERIES

The major program activities engaged in by the Day Nurseries Branch are (1) the licensing of all day nurseries in the province; (2) the administration of provincial capital and operating grants to certain types of day nurseries; (3) the promulgation of standards for day care services and the provision of consultative and training services to them. The respective responsibilities for decision-making in each of these areas of work are reviewed below.

- 1) Licensing - The Day Nurseries Act provides that all day nurseries in Ontario must be licensed annually and under the Act licenses are initially issued and renewed by the Director of the Day Nurseries Branch. The Director may prescribe in a license "reasonable terms and conditions to the operation of the Day Nursery". The Director may refuse to issue a license if in her opinion the applicant, or if a corporation its officers and directors, is or are not competent to operate a day nursery or if it appears that the nursery will not be operated in accordance with the Act. The Director, that is, must not only be satisfied that the building and accommodation are compliant but must also make a judgment as to the capabilities and likely conduct of the sponsor. Similarly, the Director may refuse to renew a license if there has been contravention of the Act or regulations, if facilities are non-compliant or if in her opinion the nursery is operated in a manner prejudicial to the safety or welfare of the children.

The licensing process, therefore, is a centralized one. The Act does not empower the Director to delegate her authority. Decisions may be appealed by the applicant or licensee to the Day Nurseries Review Board established by the Act. There may be an appeal from the Board's decision to the Ontario Supreme Court.

The Director makes her decisions on the basis of reports from field staff known as child development counsellors. Under the Act, field staff are designated by the Minister as 'provincial supervisors' and as such they have statutory authority to enter day nurseries or any premises that they believe on reasonable grounds is being used as a day nursery and inspect the facilities, accounts, enrolment and other records. Thus, though agents of the Director, they have certain authority bestowed upon them directly by statute, the exercise of which entails judgmental decision-making. Field staff are not expected to exercise this inspectorial power in an authoritarian manner. They seek compliance to the law through explanation, persuasion and advice. This

is frequently necessary since not all applicants or licensees agree with the law. They may recommend to the Director that conditions be attached to the license or its renewal. In inspecting a nursery, field staff are concerned with accommodation facilities, equipment and furnishings, with maintenance (i.e. cleanliness and state of repair), enrolment and records, daily procedures, nutrition, health and medical supervision, staff qualifications, financial records and returns. There are requirements in the regulations with regard to all of these. The regulations are not always precise. For example, a day nursery supervisor must, among other things, be, in the opinion of the Director (ergo in the opinion of field staff in the first instance) sympathetic to the welfare of children and of a suitable personality.

There are thus important discretionary aspects to the licensing process which require professional knowledge and judgment on the part of field staff.

- 2) Grants and Bursaries - The province meets 50% of the costs of constructing and 80% of the cost of renovating facilities for day nurseries sponsored by municipalities, Indian Bands, or associations for the retarded. Responsibilities of field staff of the Day Nurseries Branch in grant administration follow the pattern of other Branches in the Ministry - they advise applying organizations of the requirements of the Act and regulations; they review the site, the accommodation and facilities and the program proposed and advise head office as to their compliance with the legislation. They assist organizations in planning the facilities and programs. The amount of the grant is determined by the Director. Its payment is directed by the Minister. The Ministry also meets 80% of net operating costs of nurseries operated by municipalities, Indian Bands or for retarded children. These claims are submitted monthly to head office and processed there.

The Day Nurseries Branch grants bursaries to staff of non-profit nurseries to take training. Field staff make recommendations to head office regarding applicants.

- 3) Consultative and Developmental Services - The Branch provides a number of services aimed at extending and improving nursery services. It has prepared a large number of leaflets on various aspects of day care. These, by and large, have been written by field staff. Field staff also maintain liaison with community colleges and other centres for training child care staff and advise them on the effectiveness of courses. They provide on-going consultation to all day nurseries and assist in the establishment of co-operative (parent operated) nurseries. They give training and demonstrations in nurseries they feel are in need of upgrading.

Day Nursery field staff meet monthly at head office under rotating chairmanship. This helps to maintain consistency in interpretation of policy, in problem solving and judgmental decision-making.

Day Nursery field staff cover large areas (the London worker has five counties) and have to be alert to situations, trends and attitudes in many communities. Though there is continuing close liaison with head office, local sources of information and advice are necessary. For this reason, one field worker reported that being part of a regional office was very helpful. It reduced the isolation. Also, the Regional Administrator was a source of information and advice on local problems. "The Director has given us a lot of responsibility. She expects that all reports be sound and backed up with a lot of evidence and assessments of situations. But we need to be able to discuss situations at the local level." This is commonly a problem in field organizations that do not have supervisory staff in the field and have a broad span of control at head office. To solve the problem, the Day Nurseries Branch has proposed the establishment of three regional supervisory positions. It is interesting to note, however, that in at least one region a fruitful working relationship with the Regional Administrator had developed.



VIII) COMMUNITY SERVICES DIVISION

Decision-making for service delivery in the four branches of the Community Services Division is in some aspects decentralized, in others centralized. Field staff are of professional status and their day-to-day work of advising and assisting client groups - assisting them examine various alternatives, determining the most appropriate strategies and relationships, assessing trends and needs in their assigned regions and districts - is based upon judgmental decisions made in the field. This decision-making is based upon the 'philosophy of service', the general principles and procedures established by each branch. These relate, for example, to the extent to which field staff should become involved in the affairs and projects of client groups. There is general stress, in this regard, upon the community development process, upon the growth of indigenous leadership and initiative. It is, for example, a basic principle of the Youth and Recreation Branch that "responsibility for planning and organizing an activity rests with the participants; with few exceptions, government at any level should assist, enable and encourage leisure time pursuits, but should not become a direct operator of activities." In the Indian Community Branch, field staff provide service to communities upon reserves only upon the request of the community and the invitation must come from official leadership; that is, it must be in the form of a resolution of the band council. Field workers are expected to be neutral vis-a-vis Indian community politics and ideologies. They must not attempt to be representatives of all provincial government services to Indians; rather they seek to make Indians aware of all government agencies and to sensitize the field personnel of other ministries to the needs of the Indians.

One dimension of field decision-making in each of the Community Services branches is that of differences among communities - in their problems, needs and structures, and the need to deliver provincial services in a manner congruent with these differences. The field man is the major instrument for accomplishing this. The Supervisor of Field Services in the Citizenship Branch is of the opinion that field staff should be local people. The Indian Community Branch states that its approach "requires thorough and complete understanding of the configuration of the community, the human interaction between the various members of a Band, the nature of current leadership and public attitudes toward it ..... one must remember that one Indian Community may be able to progress on the basis of positive accomplishment, while some others

may require several failures before they are able to mobilize towards a new and more vigorous type of action." 1) This factor of local differences is a decentralizing one in program decision-making. At the same time, because these branches are small, head office is able to provide considerable guidance to field decision-making and to monitor it.

Each of the Branches administers grants to local authorities and/or groups. The Youth and Recreation Branch, for example, administers legislative grants to local recreation committees in accordance with the Regulations and also makes discretionary grants to non-governmental groups. The Citizenship Branch, under federal-provincial agreement, shares in the costs of Citizenship Classes and also makes grants to groups undertaking projects of service to newcomers. The Indian Community Branch makes grants to Indian Bands for community development projects. The Community Development Branch has some funds for grants to citizens groups. (\$42,000 in current fiscal year, of which \$23,000 is for community information services.)

The pattern of decision-making in grant administration in the Community Services Division is similar to that in other divisions. Final decisions are made at Queen's Park. With the possible exception of Youth and Recreation grants, where it is understood approval is given within the Branch, the finalization process is a complex and time-consuming one involving the 'submission to higher authorities' process. The responsibilities of field staff are to advise applicant groups as to policies and procedures governing the provision of grants and as to the budgetary availability of funds where this is a factor, to assist groups develop their proposals and submissions (including assistance in some cases in costing and budgeting), and the informing and advising of head office with regard to applications for assistance. Some grants, e.g. the legislative grants to local recreation authorities, are largely routine and the role of field staff is essentially one of reviewing completed forms for correctness and compliance prior to forwarding to Queen's Park for payment. In other program areas, grants are usually made upon recommendations of field staff particularly where, as in the case of language classes, conditions and procedures are fairly specific. Here head office review is to ensure conformity to federal-provincial agreements. Grants of a more discretionary nature are in some program areas, particularly if not large, usually approved upon field recommendation. This has been the case with regard to discretionary grants in Youth and Recreation. Here field

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1) From Statement of Indian Community Branch on Philosophy and Program Orientation.



staff complete a Project Approval form (one page) on which is entered the name of the co-sponsoring organization and a brief description of the project. The signature of the field officer indicates his approval. Requests so signed are usually approved. The 'de facto' decision is made in the field. One Regional Assistant Superintendant reported, however, that this Ministry was beginning to require more detailed supporting data with regard to discretionary grants. This was increasing field paper but, he felt, was probably justified. The field had previously provided very little information. But some field staff felt that their judgment was less trusted than in the past.

In the Citizenship Branch, funds for discretionary grants are divided regionally. Field staff are cautioned against engaging groups in project development if their funds are low. It should perhaps be noted with regard to discretionary grants that when field staff encourage project development by groups and assist them in developing proposals, they are encouraging expectations which their Branch is reluctant to disappoint. Head office, in this respect, is partly captive of field decision-making. Its reputation very much depends on the quality of field decision-making. If it gets high quality, then field decision-making becomes decisive. This may not apply, of course, if field decisions are made at the political level, e.g. Cabinet, rather than the administrative. This is the case with grants to Indian communities. This brings new factors into the decision-making process and renders implementation of field recommendations somewhat less certain.

Some field staff find the centralizing of funding frustrating in their daily work. There are two reasons for this. Some find that lack of authority to authorize very small grants or purchases on behalf of groups unnecessarily complicates and bureaucratizes delivery of service. This problem is overcome in the Citizenship Branch where each field has a small program fund which can be used for such purposes as the duplication and distribution of materials, meeting the costs of meetings or luncheons, etc. The other source of frustration is the time involved in grant approval. This seems to be a bone of contention, particularly in the Indian Community Branch. Here projects to be funded are often of a seasonal nature and complications arise if funds are not approved until the season is well launched or even completed. The Director of the Citizenship Branch feels that the grant approval process at Queen's Park is unnecessarily complicated and time-consuming.

Field staff in Community Services Branch advise and assist groups in the implementation of funded projects. They



also evaluate projects upon completion or upon requests for renewal. Discretionary grants are generally not continuing; they are directed to specific projects or are intended as start-up financing for new community services.

A problem in field services given considerable emphasis by one Assistant Superintendant in Youth and Recreation was the implementation, through crash programming, of suddenly announced programs of special summer projects "imposed" by federal initiatives. The absence of "lead time" for this work played havoc with on-going field decision-making and planning which involves working out with local agencies, in a co-ordinated fashion, objectives and priorities. There was no opportunity to integrate the special summer projects with ongoing plans. Local planning was aborted by a scrambling for funds. The whole process, he felt, ran counter to C.O.G.P. emphasis on co-ordination in service delivery and management by objectives. It certainly ran counter to the philosophy of the Youth and Recreation Branch.

There would appear recently to have been a tendency on the part of Management Board to examine grant expenditures more closely. Whatever the reason, be it general shortage of funds or desire for co-ordination, this vigilance is, of course, a centralizing factor in decision-making and can frustrate the attempts of ministries to decentralize. Another factor influencing the pattern of decision-making is the absence, in some branches, of supervisory staff in the field. It is probably sound practise that decisions re granting funds should be made by someone other than the field worker dealing with the applying group. In the absence of a senior field supervisor, who himself is not engaged in direct service, or a generalist regional administrator or regional division chief, decision-making must be made at head office. Thus the present size of these branches together with the overall field organization of the Ministry militates against decentralization. Another factor tending toward centralization is the desire on the part of head office to ensure consistency in a very judgmental area. As noted above, communities differ, one from the other, and field staff become identified with their communities. Removal of decision-making to head office supports objectivity and eliminates possible conflicts of interest. It also gets the field worker "off-the-hook".

D) THE ROLE OF THE FIELD IN PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

I Field Participation in Policy Formation

The role of the field in policy-making in programs for which the Regional Administration Branch was responsible was discussed with several regional administrators. The general consensus seemed to be that though in the past regional administrators had little opportunity for policy input, there had been significant changes over the past two or three years. A new participatory stance was adopted at the quadri-regional conferences. Also, greater opportunities for regional administrators to influence policy matters arose with the formation of the regional administrators group, and its co-ordinating and divisional committees. As one Regional Administrator stated, "Before the formation of this group, each Regional Administrator advanced his concerns individually as occasions arose. These were read at head office, filed and generally not acted upon. Now we can develop proposals as a group and our collective representations have more influence."

Despite this development, however, there would seem to be considerable limitations on the extent and influence of Regional Administrator input on policy matters in the program areas for which they have responsibility. First, the development of major policy initiatives and changes seems to be very much still a head office function. These considerations would apply to other branches as well. One reason is that many programs are federal-provincial in financing. Co-operative federalism has a centralizing influence on provincial policy development because it entails negotiations and bargaining with federal authorities involving senior inter-ministry mechanisms of various sorts, because the issues involved are frequently highly technical and at the same time very political. To what extent, for example, were regional administrators and their field staffs involved in the formulation of the Canada Assistance Plan. Head office may be influenced by pressures and concerns coming from the field, as it is by pressures and concerns emanating from other quarters, but there seems to be little organized involvement of Regional Administration in major policy development. Their involvement is directed to policy adjustments and refinements (exactly the right words said one Regional Administrator) to operational and administrative policies. (Note that members of the Task Force from the Ministry are all from head office. Was any consideration given to appointing an experienced senior field administrator to this policy development body?) The Task Force, of course, is rightfully anxious to get input from the field and this brings forward another limitation on field roles in policy

development. There is, as noted, increased willingness of head office to get suggestions from the field. In the decision-making model, the field is one source of input for head office policy makers as they search their environment for facts and alternatives. But the field has not, until recently at any rate, been brought into the policy making groups that assess the alternatives and formulate detailed proposals. A comprehensive listing of all organizations, inter-ministry committees and committees of which ministry staff were members <sup>1)</sup> (there were several pages of them) revealed no names of regional administrators or other field personnel. If this document could be considered as revealing the elite structure of the ministry, it would appear that field personnel are not among the elite, an anomalous situation in a ministry that is so field based.

This exclusion of regional administrators from policy development instruments and committees at head office dealing with ministry affairs generally lessens their capacity to make effective inputs. One regional administrator who had been on a head office committee said that as a result of this experience he gained some understanding for the first time of head office concerns and constraints. Without this experience and knowledge, he felt, it is difficult for field men to make inputs that have weight at head office. He went on to add that the field should not be on the periphery of management (and on this he is right) but unless it had opportunity to share head office's knowledge and problems, it would be. This factor should be born in mind in consideration of the Ministry's future organization.

Exclusion of senior field staff from head office planning bodies fosters that latent paranoia which seems to be a general characteristic of administrative behaviour in the field. It supports the tendency toward the 'we-they' psychology. This exists in this Ministry. Regional Administrators, as a whole, seem to be a suspicious lot with tendencies toward a conspiratorial theory of administrative behaviour. Thus some feel acceptance of the Regional Administrators' group was more symbolic than substantial. "They let us start and then make moves to weaken us." (Conspiracy theory) The same tendency is reflected in the remark heard at a Regional Administrators' meeting: "They have made up their minds anyway." At the moment, Regional Administrators seem to feel they should as a group be able, through their own chairman, to have direct access to the Assistant Deputy Minister. The head office of

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1) It was circulating in the Task Force office in December.



their own branch is included among the 'they'. This is an organizational matter but is mentioned here as an example of the alienation that results when able people don't get a piece of the action. It should be noted that there is some division of opinion among Regional Administrators on this matter. Some feel there should be more input but feel this should be exercised through the Regional Administration Branch. Their head office becomes their input channel. Others want an independent channel.

The situation does seem to be changing. For example, Municipal Welfare Administration Branch recently advanced proposals with regard to the development of its services and its organization. A regional administrator sat upon the Committee that developed these proposals. The report was "rejected" by Regional Administrators at their December meeting. They requested opportunity for further input. Increasingly, regional administrators and, to a lesser extent, the welfare field supervisors are being involved in committee work.

To what extent are field workers involved in policy matters? Enlightenment on this matter will be provided by the inter-regional interview reports.<sup>1)</sup> One or two general impressions are offered here.

Field worker participation varies from region to region. In most of the regional offices visited by the writer there were staff development or staff meeting committees and periodic meetings of field workers. These committees and meetings give field workers a forum and a channel for the articulation of concerns and proposals.

Field workers themselves, of course, vary greatly in their interest in policy matters. Many older field workers hired before the participatory era began, before the age of client rights and client representation, are primarily "task-oriented". Younger field staff are more policy oriented. One gains the impression of a field corps becoming increasingly conscious of Ministry goals and governed in their task performance and in their ministerial attitudes and relationships by their perceptions of these goals. With such a group, opportunity to make input and a willingness, in the Ministry's response, to listen and consider is important in maintaining the morale of such a group and in retaining it in the Ministry. It is a matter that should be given continuing thought by Regional Administration. A number of problems and pitfalls arise in this regard, however. If wide-spread staff participation in program and managerial decision-making is to be effective, staff need to be kept

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1) See Appendix.

informed of policy trends and issues arising; otherwise they will not be able to participate effectively. This can be done through the written word, e.g. memos or newsletters to staff setting out policy issues, or verbally, e.g. regional administrators set out issues in staff meetings. Further, there must be sufficient known response to field staff suggestions for field staff to feel their efforts have been worthwhile.<sup>1)</sup> Nothing angers a field worker more than being pulled away from his work to engage in unproductive deliberations. If there is time to kill, he or she knows better ways of doing it. Proliferation of meetings creates hostility. Secondly, every opportunity should be seized to get field input on matters where some commitment to accepting results can be made. These criteria can most frequently be met in matters pertaining to goals, work organization and staff deployment at the regional level. In St. Catharines regional office, for example, an experiment is underway whereby for a given area one worker will handle applications and initial homevisits, while another worker will handle the continuing caseload (e.g. P.C.R.'s, problem solving). It is understood the idea was proposed by field workers in a staff meeting.

In the other Branches with smaller and less complex field organizations, the impression was gained that there was copious opportunity for field input. In the Day Nurseries Branch, field consultants meet monthly under revolving chairmanship; in Vocational Rehabilitation, field supervisors meet monthly. Field staff consulted seemed to agree with their Directors that there was lots of discussion and lots of input. The field was kept informed of policy issues and contributed to their resolution. The same would hold true of the Community Services Division field services. These field services become very much involved in local community decision-making processes and the philosophy of administration tends to be democratic and participatory. Field initiatives in input are expected and accepted. These smaller branches have fairly strong communicational ties with the field and administrative officers at Queen's Park are likely to have had field experience.

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- 1) One of the complaints of Regional Administrators is that suggestions are often made to head office, sometimes at head office's request, where they disappear, often without acknowledgment. There is an image in the fieldmen's minds of Queen's Park as a coffee grinder so complicated and cumbersome in its internal mechanisms that a coffee bean placed in the top is ground forever and never gets out the other end. One of the circumstances that brings this image out of the unconscious into the conscious mind is never hearing what happened to your idea. This is a problem of communications.

## II Program Planning in the Field

Policies and programs vary in the scope they offer for decentralization in the setting of goals and priorities. Programs such as Family Benefits, which provide statutory and specific services on a uniform basis throughout the province are amenable only to a very limited degree to local adaptations of objectives or to regional variations in the implementation of component benefits. Programs or services, on the other hand, which are very general in their objectives or which are not mandatory under legislation such as social services to Family Benefits beneficiaries, or community development services, do permit the setting of objectives in the field. In fact, the adaptation of broad provincial goals to local conditions may be necessary for effective service delivery. Most of the services provided by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, except those of income maintenance, possess the latter characteristics to a greater or lesser degree. They offer considerable scope for the decentralization of management by objectives.

There seemed consensus among the regional administrators interviewed that they had a general mandate for regional planning in several program or service areas. These included, as noted earlier, social services to income maintenance recipients, community organization and social planning, municipal welfare administration. Some aspects of income maintenance, e.g. trusteeship services, the securing of adequate shelter, are also amenable to regional experimentation. Planning in social services was undertaken in consultation with the Social Services Consulting Unit but in social planning (e.g. "community work") and in consultative services to municipal welfare authorities, Regional Administrators seemed pretty much on their own. The mandate held is something short of a ministerial duty. Its exercise is left very much up to the initiative of the Regional Administrator with some expectation at head office that it be exercised. (Although Regional Administrators, in 1972, were requested to submit proposals for social services in their regions.) Two Regional Administrators stated that though they could exercise initiative in developing proposals and projects, the degree of authority to implement was not clear. Their tendency was to move ahead and await repercussions.

Not all Regional Administrators have training or experience in some of the newer types of Ministry activities, for example, community organization and social planning. This is a very complex area of work and no guidelines seem to have been provided to them. One Regional Administrator said he



felt community organization was expected of him but nobody had told him how. Another Regional Administrator, himself competent in community work, said that some of the older hands trained as public welfare administrators in an earlier day had "had it pretty rough". There is need for training and development at the Regional Administrator level.

There is some scope for the setting of regional objectives and priorities in the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Informational and interpretive activities directed towards agencies, developmental services aimed at improving rehabilitation services in the region, extending contacts with employers and securing placements for on-the-job training are perhaps the program areas most amenable to regional goal setting.

In the Day Nurseries Branch, field staff are encouraged to set goals to govern task planning. Project Day Care played havoc with this.

Programs in the Community Services Division are, as the name of the Division implies, closely related to local communities and program priorities and emphases vary from region to region. It is a responsibility of field staff to develop patterns of service in keeping with local conditions and needs. In Yough and Recreation, this is the responsibility of regional Assistant Superintendents, though planning is done collectively with his district consultants. Each region develops a costed annual program. These are reviewed and aggregated into a sectional budget by the Superintendent of the Community Programs Section, which budget then goes to the Branch Director. The same general procedure is followed in the Citizenship Branch. Each field consultant submits an annual program proposal to the Supervisor of Field Services. He does not, however, budget his program. According to the Supervisor of Field Services, stress is placed upon experimentation and innovation. Regions are testing grounds for programs. One of her functions is to assess the effectiveness of services in different communities.

### III Program Management in the Field

Decentralization of program planning implies decentralization in program management, that is in the mobilization of resources to achieve goals. Program management can also be decentralized even if program planning is not. Thus in the field administration of Family Benefits and G.W.A., regional administrators have authority to deploy staff geographically and functionally, to develop work procedures so as to meet

as effectively as possible demands made upon them. Some regional administrators and field supervisors are of the opinion that the problem of servicing rising caseloads with fixed establishments can be coped with through innovations in staff deployment. Others are skeptical. Argument waxed heavy on this point at the October Supervisors' conference in North Bay. Whatever the possibilities, however, shortfalls in staff budgets are an influence making for innovation. A number of regions have established specialized intake workers or units to answer requests for information, do initial screening and handle application procedures prior to home visits. This removes a considerable burden of work from field workers on their clerical days in the office. St. Catharines is experimenting with a system whereby one worker concentrates on applications, another on on-going caseload service. There is variation also in the way in which regions handle special investigations, in the utilization of field worker II's, and field representatives, and in responsibilities of field services supervisors.

Though responsible for program management in their regions, regional administrators neither develop or administer a regional budget. Staff, equipment, supplies, are requested as needed. They have further no regional funds at their disposal. They can make small ad hoc expenditures but these must not exceed \$15 at any one time. This was a source of dissatisfaction with some regional administrators. Lack of a budget limited the scope for management. It involved head office unnecessarily in the details of field administration. One regional administrator, however, took the opposite point of view. He did not wish responsibility for budget preparation. It would be too time consuming. The present system whereby regional administrators were relieved of this responsibility permitted them to devote more time to program development and service delivery. His approach to field service was "the less paper work the better".

The respective responsibilities of head office and field supervisors in Vocational Rehabilitation for work organization and staff deployment was not explored. In the other branches, field staff seem to enjoy considerable discretion in adapting activity to demand. This was a major responsibility of regional assistant superintendents in Youth and Recreation.

IV Some Aspects of Personnel Management

1) Hiring Field Staff:

In the functional branches - e.g. Vocational Rehabilitation, Day Nurseries, Youth and Recreation, the hiring of field staff (except clerical staff) is carried out by branch head offices in co-operation with the Personnel Branch. In Regional Administration, however, considerable responsibility for the recruiting of field staff has been delegated to regional administrators, including not only field workers and legal aid workers, but also social workers and field representatives. It might be truer to say that present hiring procedures permit Regional Administrators to exercise considerable influence in the hiring process. I am not sure to what extent there has been official delegation of authority. The procedure in hiring field staff for the Regional Administration Branch would appear to be as follows:

Competitions are advertised locally (as far as can be gathered as vacancies occur; there does not seem to be general competitions to build up eligible lists). If local competitions do not produce enough good candidates, competitions will be advertised elsewhere, although in the past two years or so there has been a plethora of applicants, rendering this procedure somewhat academic. The Personnel Branch determines when a competition will be held although a Regional Administrator may influence its precise timing. For some positions, he might wish to delay holding the competition until he is satisfied that there are some good candidates to choose from. It seems to be general practise for the Personnel Branch not to hold competitions until vacancies actually occur, even if it is known well ahead of time that because of retirement or for other reasons, a vacancy will occur. This is very frustrating for field services supervisors for whom this practise means that often for prolonged periods a portion of the caseload remains unserved, 1) work accumulates and waiting lists build up. The greenhorn, when he or she arrives, is not able to benefit from staged on-the-job training but is plunged into an ocean of difficult work. One field services supervisor felt that this could be avoided. The Personnel Branch, he felt, could make a good prediction of vacancies that would occur during a year and could hold competitions at periodic intervals. This would, he felt, solve another problem - namely the lack of co-ordination between the holding of competitions and the holding of training courses for new workers. At the present, new staff may have to wait several weeks for the training course. Thus the new

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- 1) Field workers are assigned districts within regions. A vacancy means an unserved district.



recruit not only has to plunge into a troublesome ocean, he or she has to do it without benefit of swimming lessons.

Upon the closing of a competition the Personnel Branch at Queen's Park reviews the applications, screening out those which are obviously ineligible. The remaining are forwarded to the regional office, where a selection committee comprised of the Regional Administrator, a representative of the Personnel Branch, and in some regions the field services supervisor, interviews the candidates and recommends to Personnel Branch which one be appointed. The decision is basically a field decision and Regional Administrators consulted were generally satisfied that it was they "de facto" that hired staff. This area of administrative decision-making is therefore decentralized.

The qualifications required of field workers are very broad. There are no specified occupational or professional requirements and candidates are drawn from the general population. The position seems to attract a wide range of candidates in terms of education and social and educational background - high school graduates, social service graduates of community colleges, B.A.'s, and in some regions apparently M.S.W.'s. The appointment of graduates of universities and community colleges is a recent development. Many, if not most field workers (no survey was done) are high school graduates. Field workers include divorced or widowed women who themselves have been recipients of Family Benefits. A number of field workers interviewed were married women. They could not accept promotional transfers to another region; some looked for some reward for long and skilful service; others were content to toil faithfully in the vineyard.

The collective attributes of field staff vary somewhat from region to region according to the predilections of regional administrators. One expressed an intention of hiring only M.S.W.'s; he felt that the state of the labour market in his region permitted him to do so. Another seemed to favour older candidates with experience of life.

Elected representatives frequently refer persons seeking employment to the Ministry as potential candidates for field positions. Politicians of all parties can provide a useful recruiting base for the manning of field offices and, of course, their interest in field operations is to be encouraged. To be effective in this regard, however, they need to have a sound understanding of the work to be done and the qualifications required to do it effectively. This is particularly the case with respect to those positions for which there are not specified professional requirements.

This decentralization of decision-making in the hiring of field workers, though advantageous and in keeping with the principles of decentralized administration, gives rise, however, to some important questions. To what extent, for example, should hiring stress the selection of personnel with potential for promotion and interbranch movement? If it should, are there adequate opportunities for promotion and transfers? Should education and training be stressed? If not, are there criteria regarding the qualities conducive to success, and if so by what techniques can they best be discovered in candidates? Should there be an overall manpower inventory to provide a basis for assessing strengths and weaknesses of existing establishment and to guide selection in individual competitions? In other words, are present approaches too ad hoc? Should regional discretion be tempered somewhat by a general manpower development policy in the Regional Administration Branch?

## 2) Staff Training and Development:

Staff training and development has two components - the training and orientation of new staff and the on-going training of existing staff. The following reviews the training and development of field workers in regional administration. Responsibility for the first is shared by the Training and Staff Development Branch. The former gives an introductory training and orientation course in Toronto. This is followed by a period of on-the-job training in the field, after which the recruit returns to Toronto for a final series of group sessions. The courses in Toronto are psychologically oriented, stressing worker-client relationships and communications. There seems general acceptance of the program, although there appears to be some difficulties with it. The major cause of concern among regional administrators, and particularly among supervisors, was that on-going administrative duties and workloads did not permit sufficient attention to be paid to on-the-job training during the second phase of the program. The Toronto region does have a training officer, but other

regions presumably are not large enough to afford this luxury. One member of the Training and Staff Development Branch reported that recruits returning for Phase III at head office and the regional offices come with problems and anxieties which frustrate the purpose of the sessions. One field supervisor suggested that there be a mobile training unit to overcome this difficulty but it is difficult to see how such a unit could be in several regions simultaneously following Phase I. Another possible solution would be to place a training officer in each of the 4 major geographic divisions (i.e. Central, East, West and North) with one region in each division being a training region. Recruits would spend part of Phase II in the training region. This is a system used in some ministries. There is some use of the 'buddy system' for on-the-job training. New workers are paired with experienced workers. In one supervisor's opinion this system has its dangers. If the old worker has bad habits, the new one gets them. There was a feeling, also, among some field supervisors that recruits should get more intensive instruction in legislation and regulations and in practical field work. They did not feel that this should be their responsibility.

On-going training and development is undertaken in the regions. There is variation in amount and in methods. (There are in the field old hands, employed before the present orientation program was initiated, who have never received formal training.) Increasing attention is being paid to this. Most of the regions visited had training and development committees to plan and organize staff meetings.<sup>1)</sup> Members of the Training and Staff Development Branch will visit the regions on request to advise and assist in organizing regional workshops and courses and will prepare materials for them. There seems to be general stress on staff participation in planning events and on the utilization of local resources. In Thunder Bay, a staff development program involving several local agencies had been developed.

Opinions varied among field workers interviewed as to staff training and development. Some felt adequately trained and skilled for the work, though they felt there was value in staff meetings for problem solving and clarification. Others, particularly perhaps those oriented to the social service component, felt the need for more training in dealing with the psychological and social problems of recipients. Others felt there should be refresher courses to update staff

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1) In some regions, these are interbranch committees.



on changes in legislation and regulations. Some enjoyed large meetings, the quadri-regional meetings and the ministry meetings. Others felt that large meetings weren't too helpful.

There does not seem to be formal orientation programs for new workers in Legal Aid or Municipal Welfare Administration. Responsibility for both initial training and ongoing training appears to be primarily with Regional Administrators.

No information was obtained on the initial orientation and training of field staff in the other Branches. In the smaller branches, e.g. Day Nurseries, Citizenship, Youth and Recreation, field staff meet regularly at Queen's Park, monthly, quarterly or annually, and training and development is one of the functions of these meetings.

In the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Branch the training and orientation of new staff has been primarily the responsibility of field supervisors. According to the former Director, they felt this to be something of a burden and were requesting more support from head office. An annual staff institute is held and staff are sent to courses and conferences. Intensive training is given to new supervisors. Mr. Amos felt that overall training needed strengthening and that the staff wanted it. The Branch could use one full-time training officer. One field counsellor felt a need for knowledge in specialized areas such as retardation and alcoholism.

### 3) Promotion

No review was made of the policies and procedures of the Ministry with regard to the promotion of field staff. Some attention was paid to the problem of promotional opportunities for field workers in Regional Administration. Did field workers get locked into their regions, into their branches? Was it a dead end job conducive to frustration, perfunctory task performance and low morale on the part of able workers? Opinion seems to vary. One regional administrator felt that promotional opportunities existed although most of his staff were married women, not hankering after promotion. (Question: was this a male assumption?) The Director of Personnel, on the other hand, seems of the opinion that field workers do get locked in and unable to realize their potential. In fact, the situation seems to vary from region to region. In regions where there are not Field Worker II positions or supervisors, promotional opportunities are limited. In urban regions there is more diversity of positions. There is also more diversity in tasks and able workers can be given a variety of experiences as training. Of regional administrators interviewed, more than half had come up the promotional ladder. Among other staff, several had

experienced promotion from legal aid officer to field representative, from Field Worker I to Field Worker II (General Welfare Assistance Officer), from Field Worker to Supervisor. It is, of course, in the nature of the bureaucratic pyramid that not everyone can be promoted. The question is what range of possibilities is equitable and conducive to productivity. One criteria is the range of responsibilities and task complexities in a given position series. The impression was gained, for example, that a Field Worker I with a specialized dependent child caseload had a more complex task than one with a single person caseload. There could be an additional level or two in this series, although this would entail adopting specialized caseloads in all regions and this would present difficulties. However, the possibility of extending the classifications for field workers is worth considering.

## V Field Communications

### 1) Regional Administration Branch:

Head office communications to the regional offices appears to vary somewhat from region to region. Perhaps it might be truer to say that opinion as to the state of communications varied among regional administrators. One Regional Administrator reported that on the whole communications, both ways, were reasonably good. They had been deplorable but were improving. Another reported that communications from head office were virtually non-existent except for memos or directives. The impression was received that this regional office was an isolated one. Another regional administrator reported that there was not very much communication from head office but this was fine by him: he liked being on his own. Again, another reported head office-field communications were adequate for his purposes. If communications from head office left him uninformed or in doubt on any matter, he could easily find out by contacting the appropriate branch official with no trouble. This Regional Administrator followed the practise of accumulating a list of problems. When the list reached a worthy size, he took off for Queen's Park and a round of visits.

These different attitudes suggest some interesting things about communications in Regional Administration in the fall of 1972. Firstly, they indicate a system in which the nature and extent of the communications developed was very much a function of the initiative of the field officer.

Each in a sense could develop his own system. Secondly, they indicated various levels of understanding and expectation with regard to communication. Some Regional Administrators seemed blithely indifferent to the matter while others placed considerable stress on it. To some, communications meant the written memo or directive, and the less paper the better. Others regarded communications as a personal verbal relationship. To others again, communications were meetings with head office for problem solving. It did not appear that regional administrators, as a group, had been instructed in the techniques and uses of communications.

Though information about head office-field communications was derived from the above subjective attitudes, the following general impressions are offered:

- 1) In the past, head office-field communications had been limited and mostly in the downward direction. However, over the past two or three years considerable improvement had been brought about. There were more meetings with head office staff, more involvement of the field in Ministry affairs. There was still a tendency, however, one Regional Administrator felt, in the Ministry, for head office staff to let the field know only what they thought they should know. The field, he felt, were still peripheral.
- 2) Some Regional Administrators seemed to have developed a quite extensive communications network and to be very much engaged in various head office affairs. Others were entirely disengaged. Whether this was self-selection or head office selection is not known. It is probably in part related to special projects. One Regional Administrator reported frequent visits by head office personnel. Others said they were seldom visited. Visits are occasioned by special projects. Senior head office staff appear willing to go to regional offices when asked, e.g. for staff meetings.
- 3) Communication from head office about the reasons for many policies or decisions appear limited. One Regional Administrator felt that perhaps the reason for no reasons with regard to some matters was, in fact, that there were no reasons. "I would like to know the rationale for allocation of resources to the regions for staff." He could discern no principles or priorities. The writer hesitates to affirm he was correct with regard to this specific matter. From the point of view of communications, the significant thing is that the Administrator had this impression.



- 4) There appeared to be lack of a communicating response by head office to suggestions and problems from the field. "We are sometimes asked to make suggestions", one Regional Administrator said, "and can go to some trouble to do so, but we don't hear what happens to the suggestions. We don't know what was thought of them; sometimes we don't even get an acknowledgment." This was a cause of alienation. To the extent that it represents the actual situation, it should be corrected. The inauguration of the regional administrators group and its divisions, and of periodic branch meetings of Regional Administrators, should go a long way to correcting this deficiency. In integrated field administration, it is one of the functions of the office of Regional Administration at head office to represent the interests of the field in this regard, to ensure feed back of feedback, to follow up with branches on matters for which there has been field input.
- 5) There is very little communication between Regional Administrators and the branches without field staff. Regional Administrators were justifiably critical of this. "I have been here five (eight) years. I know that child welfare people, homes for the aged people, etc., are in and out of the region frequently. I am told this by people in the community. But not one has ever been to this office."

This situation is in part the consequence of general patterns of communication between the Ministry and client groups in some program areas. The groups communicate their concerns directly to the branch at head office. Municipal homes for the aged and the Homes for the Aged Branch form a system. C.A.S.'s and the Child Welfare Branch are a system. Though the regional offices are becoming increasingly involved with the social problems with which these systems are involved, they are not part of these systems. If there is to be any effective degree of integration of field services, regional offices will have to get into them. In fact, regionalization will be difficult to accomplish unless the systems are also regionalized. One way to do this is to put decision-making in the field.

Even in program areas with field staff in Regional Administration, an agency might take its concerns directly to head office, e.g. Municipal Welfare Administration. Agencies should have this choice perhaps, but strong regional administration (a prerequisite of which is back up from head office branches) should certainly diminish it. One branch director, though

not opposed to regional integration, felt that agencies should continue to have direct access to head office. Regionalization will be complicated by the provincial umbrella organizations with local branches. They provide a direct communication channel from the grass roots to Queen's Park.

- 6) There has been considerable development in horizontal communication between regions through the geographic divisions. Divisions meet to discuss and solve problems common to their several regions, to develop proposals for their overall committee.
- 7) The amount of communication in the field between the Field Services Branch and the other branches varies considerably from region to region. In some regional offices good contacts seem to have developed between Regional Administrators and their staffs and other branches. This process is helped when branches share offices. In some regions, regional staff development committees with representatives of all branches had been established. In other regions there has been little contact. The nature of the region is a factor here. In urban regional offices engaged in social service and social planning, closer inter-branch relations develop than in rural regions where emphasis is mainly income maintenance. One Regional Administrator confessed he had yet to meet the Youth and Recreation man working in the same town.

## 2) Other Branches

In the functional branches which are smaller, there are strong communication links between head office and field. With regard to regional administration, the writer got the impression that there were "two cultures" of head office and field. He did not get the impression in the other branches. They met together frequently. They seemed to agree on some issues. Field staff complained of delays in grant approvals; head office also complained. One Regional Supervisor in Youth and Recreation, however, felt that since joining this Ministry signs of division were appearing. The Ministry's management system seemed to be demanding more paper; field work was becoming bureaucratized.

Horizontal field communications among Program IV branches seemed to be developing. In Western Ontario they had met as a group and were as a group attempting to develop methods of effectively deploying their common resources in service delivery.





APPENDIX

REPORT OF

INTER-REGIONAL INFORMATION PROJECT



## REPORT OF INTER-REGIONAL INFORMATION PROJECT

### INTRODUCTION

Staff from almost all regions were represented in the Task Force's Inter-regional Information Project, either as interviewers or as interviewees. Members of all branches and staff at all levels were interviewed. The Task Force wishes to thank all participants for the time and thought they gave to this project. The returns were of very high quality indeed, comprehensive and stimulating.

Ninety-two interviews were held. Detailed statistical tabulation of the returns was not attempted. This would have taken an undue length of time. This impressionistic account is offered instead in the interest of speedier processing and response. Care should be taken not to assume that the interviewees were necessarily a representative sample of all field personnel. They were volunteer interviewees and in part a self-selected group. To some degree, opinions therefore are representative of those field staff interested in expressing their views. Some branches are represented by three or less interviewees.

The report summarizes answers to all questions except the first which dealt with responsibilities of interviewee positions. This question was intended primarily for exchange of information among field personnel and we hope that participants in the project found it useful.

A copy of the questionnaire is placed at the end of the Report for reference.

The following report could not cover all the facts, suggestions and ideas contained in hundreds of answers, but we hope it hits the highlights. If readers feel that anything has been omitted or misinterpreted, please let the Task Force know. We hope it will be read widely, that it will be discussed and provoke further response.



Do you know what you're doing? (Question 2)

A considerable variety of opinions and feelings were expressed by interviewees as to the clarity and compatibility of their roles and tasks. It would appear that job specifications, variations in regional expectations, and other factors, leave room for variations in worker images of their jobs and for responses to these images. This, of course, has advantages; it gives workers elbow room in job development and opportunities to exercise strengths. It can at the same time cause inner tensions and conflicts.

The majority of field workers interviewed felt that their tasks were defined with sufficient clarity, were in themselves compatible or, though perhaps potentially incompatible, could be rendered congruent through the exercise of skill and tact. But a significant number felt they were not clear, or not compatible, or neither. A few felt that the nature of the work, the plurality of roles, rendered clarity difficult. A certain vagueness was accepted as part of the job. Others felt that their role as income maintenance workers was clear but that their role as untrained social workers was not. Others again felt that individual tasks were clear but overall task configuration, the relative emphasis to be given was not. Heavy case loads contributed to this attitude. Job image and job reality conflicted. The major area of incompatibility was that pertaining to the worker as control agent on the one hand and helper on the other. Many field workers felt these are incompatible roles. The nature of the conflict is illustrated by the dilemma felt by some workers - "Should I bend the law a little in the long run interests of the client?" Conflict also arises when workers have to investigate reports from other individuals or agencies with respect to clients with whom they have established a good relationship. Maintaining client trust and respect is a perilous business at best. Many workers feel that the problem of incompatibility could be overcome if caseloads were at a level that permitted more attention to clients. Heavy workloads also create incompatibilities, not so much in worker roles as in relations with clients. Some help given creates expectations that cannot always be fulfilled. "Sometimes we desert them in critical situations." The question arises as to whether some attention might be paid, in staff development, to the handling of incompatibility. It is a source of emotional stress in a number of field workers.

Other personnel felt that by and large their roles were compatible. For the majority also they were sufficiently clear. Two Program IV workers reported they worked within very broad flexible roles. "The goal is clear but the 'how to' requires clarification." A Day Nursery consultant felt it was impossible to clarify her role as it was

constantly changing. Indeed the impact of change upon field roles is felt by a number of workers. Job specifications become outdated. Officially specified tasks are clear but unofficial emerging ones are not. This opinion was expressed by two field representatives. Some jobs have tended to develop historically and have areas of uncertainty and conflict. This seems to be the case with Regional Administrators. Clerical staff engaged in reception and intake reported some uncertainties. Caseworkers have broadly defined jobs. This permitted adaptation of tasks to local communities. One felt a "factual and rational basis" for service needed to be developed. Two areas of uncertainty and conflict were reported by Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellors. One pertained to means testing for prosthetic appliances; the other to counselling. Counsellors were expected to do intensive counselling but were given larger and larger caseloads.

"Who Would Fardels Bear" (Question 3)

Field personnel of the Ministry, if the opinions of the interviewees are representative, have heavy and taxing workloads. Many field workers, perhaps the majority though not the preponderance, felt they are too heavy. For some of these they are unreasonable, for most they are manageable but are too heavy because they don't permit adequate service to clients and attention to all aspects of the work. Most of those who felt workloads were reasonable also reported difficulties in attending, to their satisfaction, to clients' needs or to discretionary aspects of the work that they felt to be important. A number of field workers reported, however, that workloads were not unduly heavy because of client needs but because of internal demands for paper work and clerical duties. Others felt that working arrangements created pressures. "One clerical day is not enough. It is not a clerical day, it is a phone day." Many field personnel put in a lot of overtime in order to keep up. Several field workers recognized there was a subjective element in assessing workloads. It depended on one's interpretation of the job. Other factors in addition to client needs, administrative arrangements and worker perceptions of the job that contributed to work pressures were distance and excessive travelling; weather and roads (northern workers particularly insist that the rest of us just don't appreciate the effects either of the elements or the ban on studded tires); and, in field services, special investigations.

Heavy workloads in Program IV result in inadequate attention to many communities, lack of depth in task performance, inability to do the tasks for which the worker was trained, inadequate time for follow-up, loss of staff.

Clerical personnel are divided in their responses to work loads. Two of four G.W.A. clerks find their workloads too heavy. For others, replacement cheques cause overwork or intake doesn't get sufficient attention. Legal Aid interviewees and social workers (with one exception) reported their workloads reasonable. In Vocational Rehabilitation workloads are considered too heavy to give proper service. Three out of four field representatives felt their work loads were reasonable. Regional Administrators' workloads are demanding and taxing.

#### Decisions, decisions, decisions (Question 4)

Most of the interviewees, at all levels, and in all branches, report that their work entails making decisions, great or small, that influence service delivery. Some clerical staff feel excluded from decision-making though G.W.A. 'decisioners', receptionists and intake secretaries do not. Some few field workers (a minority) reported that they made no or few decisions, but most reported that their work lives were decision-making ones.

Decisions most commonly reported by field workers were referrals involving other agencies. All in all, referrals appear to be a very important part of field worker services to Family Benefits and G.W.A. recipients. Another area of decision-making that was important entailed making recommendations to the Family Benefits Branch with regard to certain benefits, for example, repairs, special diets, fuel allowances. Important decisions for many caseworkers are those related to the handling of cases - how much time should be given to a client? What is the best way of dealing with a case? Does the client require counselling? Work planning decisions and caseload management decisions were likewise frequently mentioned. There are reporting decisions (what to report, what not to report), priority decisions (who to serve first), assessment decisions (is there desertion? should there be a declaration of paternity?).

There are, of course, constraints and limitations on decision-making and some field workers fret under these. They feel that the range of decision-making is narrow, that



their recommendations don't carry much weight in service delivery. Lack of direct contact with eligibility decision-makers in Toronto, the difficulty of communication through form and memo is frustrating to many fieldworkers. Most, however, would probably agree that service decisions are important and can influence a client's well being.

For other personnel - Program IV, Day Nurseries, Legal Aid, Field Representatives, Social Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, field decisions are in good part service delivery decisions.

### Enterprise (Question 5)

The majority of interviewees reported that their jobs offered scope for initiative and judgment. A significant minority of field workers felt there was little or no scope. "The Department does an excellent job of training form fillers." "The routine nature of the work leaves little room for initiative." The majority of fieldworkers would appear to disagree, however, with this assessment. There are, however, constraints upon the exercise of initiative and judgment which are frustrating for some. The major constraint was heavy caseloads chaining one to routine tasks. There is some feeling that the Ministry expects quantity rather than quality in work. Inadequacies in legislation are cited as another barrier to exercising effective initiatives in meeting client needs. Legislation, however, is improving. A few workers feel their initiative is dampened by administrators and supervisors or if exercised does not bear results. Several stressed the need for judgment, particularly in making referrals. "I have scope to keep probing to get to the root of problems .... and come up with the appropriate referral."

By and large interviewees were able to expound, at some length, upon the skills and attributes required in their work. Those in Program IV, Day Nurseries, Vocational Rehabilitation and Social Service tended to stress the necessary objective professional knowledge and skills, and also relational and communicative skills. Field workers on the other hand, tended to stress general attributes of mind, character and temperament. Many words were used to describe these - empathy (a current favourite), tolerance, acceptance, maturity, stoicism, rapport, understanding, ability to communicate and establish relations. The required skills mentioned included skills in listening

and interviewing, counselling, writing accurate and concise reports, inter-organizational communication, work organization, handling emotional problems, filling out forms, obtaining information from people reluctant to give it and conversing with people at all levels. Of the kinds of knowledge required, knowledge of resources was mentioned by several, as was also knowledge of the legislation and procedures. Skills important to clerical staff include ability to handle hostile clients, ability to listen and communicate, accuracy and thoroughness in budgeting, ability to organize, tact, versatility and flexibility. There are, however, clerical staff doing routine work with limited opportunity for decision-making or initiative.

#### Satisfaction and Frustration (Question 6)

For most field workers, the major satisfactions of their work are other-regarding and relate in one way or another to helping clients. Particular satisfaction is gained when clients cope, improve, become self-supporting; when a specific need, e.g. housing, is met; when a difficult problem is solved. Many field workers get general satisfaction from working with people and from involvement with different types of people and agencies. Making appropriate referrals and seeing the grant arrive are also sources of satisfaction. So also is being recognized as human by the client and getting one's pay cheque. There would seem to be in field work some opportunity for "self growth and the fulfilment of some aspirations".

Field workers also have numerous frustrations. These are occasioned by heavy caseloads and by shortcomings in legislation and services. Many of these frustrations are mentioned in other parts of this report - conflicting roles, office accommodation, lack of on-the-job training. While clients that do change occasion satisfaction, those who are recalcitrant cause frustration. Communication with the Family Benefits Branch, not having one's word accepted by calculators, having to forward receipts, dealing with local welfare offices, having to "report misrepresentations as facts" are other sources of frustration. Not being able to make decisions in Family Benefits also frustrates some. A very general cause of frustration is delays in decision-making.

G.W.A. decision clerks report a similar pattern of service satisfactions as do field workers. Their frustrations are caused by inadequate allowances, heavy

caseload, temporary absences of cheque signers, and duplications in the system.

Satisfactions reported by clerical personnel included feedback indicating effectiveness of Ministry services, client achievement, contact with people, being able to issue replacement cheques, getting expense cheques to workers on time. Frustrations included not being able to help those with legitimate need, improperly completed expense accounts, cheques that don't arrive, criticisms of other staff, the long term Study on Aging.

Among other personnel, sources of satisfaction were achievement in service delivery and goal realization (when it happened), the move by the Ministry to a "helping social philosophy", the non-routine nature of the work, freedom to innovate and speak one's mind. Frustrations were occasioned by inadequacies in social services generally, the hierarchical structure of government and centralization of authority, heavy caseloads, lack of staff and "political realities", slow Ministry response to changing needs, unreasonable demands by politicians and agencies, public misunderstanding, lack of community resources, inequities in municipal welfare. Some specific frustrations were lack of information on Family Benefits recipients' budgets; federal funding policies, lack of clarity in relationship of Vocational Rehabilitation Supervisor to Regional Administrator.

#### Turns for the Better (Question 7)

A number of suggestions were made by interviewees for changing job responsibilities and tasks. Those proposed by field workers included: (1) division of work into intake units and service units; (2) case aides for bank searches, registry office searches and other routine tasks; (3) gearing number of visits to client needs; (4) field workers continue handling P.C.R.'s and memos re difficult clients; (5) a team approach to client service because it is difficult to be an expert in all aspects of the job; (6) more Field Worker II's for "social aspects and specialization"; (7) a specialized unit to investigate fraud and abuse. A number of workers want more time for counselling and follow up. A number of general changes in work organization were suggested - a more streamlined clerical system; less paper work; computerization, with Telex in regional offices; more communication and co-operation



with other agencies, and between different types of workers, reduction in required home visiting, less duplication in forms, particularly medical forms.

A number of the above suggestions involve greater specialization of field tasks. A number of field workers, however, do not favour specialization by caseload. It would not be practical in rural areas and would make the work less interesting. There appears to be more interest in division of work by function or technique; for example, division between application taking and on-going client relationships, between the business and clerical aspects of the work and the service aspects. It was suggested work might be more interesting if workers could specialize in areas of interest to them, e.g. job getting or budgetting.

Suggestions for changes from other personnel included the following: (1) the separation of auditing from consultation in M.W.A. field work; (2) appointment of Indian assistants with basic knowledge of bookkeeping and accounting to help Indian organizations; (3) field specialists in Youth and Recreation (would reduce workload enormously); (4) removal of responsibilities re grants from Indian Community work to provide more time for co-ordination of services on specific reserves; (5) at least one welfare field supervisor for each region; (6) more full-time intake workers; (7) put previous address on Board Orders involving change of address; (8) more specialization in Vocational Rehabilitation; (9) regionalization of the Medical Advisory Board with direct field worker participation; (10) more sub-offices; (11) locating of legal aid staff in court houses; (12) more authority for professionals in service to recipients.

### Give Us the Tools ... (Question 8)

The majority of interviewees felt that decision-making in service delivery was overly centralized and favoured greater delegation of authority to the field. A significant minority of field workers think the present system is satisfactory though decision-making is too slow. Some feel the system has improved and the trend to decentralization should continue, but most would favour substantial change. Delegation of authority to the regions in Family Benefits administration would enhance service delivery by speeding it up, by eliminating problems

of interpretation in communications re applicants and recipients, and permitting discussion between calculators and field workers. Lack of face-to-face communications with calculators is a serious shortcoming in the present system in the opinion of many field workers. Decentralization would allow prompt resolution of emergency situations, e.g. breakdown of heating system. It would give field workers more confidence on the job.

Field personnel in Vocational Rehabilitation would appear, on the whole, to favour more decentralization although the issue appears less contentious than in Field Services. Decentralization likewise appears to be less of an issue in Program IV, although it may be a matter of concern in Citizenship. The opinion was expressed that field staff in Day Nurseries did not have authority commensurate with responsibility; it was felt that licensing could be handled in the regional offices. Some field representatives feel there should be more delegation to regional offices. Regional Administrators interviewed favoured decentralization of Family Benefits. One clerk-receptionist favoured decentralization; it would eliminate overpayments and cut down on phone calls.

Dissatisfaction with centralization creates dissatisfaction with the procedures it entails. Some field workers are satisfied with present procedures but most comments were critical. They are time-consuming, cumbersome and involve duplication. Field workers complained of receiving separate memos in a short space of time with regard to one client - each entailing a separate inquiry or trip; of overly rigorous documentation; (Why do valuable documents have to be exposed to our mail and filing systems? Can't the field attest to their existence?); of client alienation. One worker felt that procedures could be followed if workloads permitted it. Suggestions for improvement included decentralization of procedures, installation of teletypes to reduce paper work and speed up procedures, elimination of duplication of forms, standardization of F.B.A. and G.W.A. forms. It was suggested that the Ministry appoint its own doctors in the field. There is too much pressure on family doctors who are often family friends.

Procedures elicited less comment in other Branches. Procedures for handling summer projects, particularly lack of time, cause difficulties for Youth and Recreation consultants. Red tape also complicates the work of some Youth and Recreation consultants. Vocational Rehabilitation staff would perhaps appreciate simpler and speedier mechanisms. One caseworker felt the present system was basically unhealthy, causing turnover of staff that put a constant burden on supervisors and managers.



Participation (Questions 9, 10 and 11)

There was a broad range of opinions and attitudes among interviewees with regard to participation in policy and management decision-making. Various factors influence these, including regional variations in the establishment of participatory mechanisms, variations in worker expectations and interests, and in the extent to which specific ventures in participation had born fruit. Most field personnel feel there are meaningful opportunities for participation in some aspects of Ministry affairs. Among administrative and supervisory personnel, there is general satisfaction with gradually increasing opportunities for input and with the establishment of mechanisms for this. Clerical staff, particularly those in G.W.A., and those with administrative or service delivery responsibilities, reported opportunities to make suggestions and cited examples of successful intervention. By and large, community services, day nurseries, legal aid and social service personnel and field representatives were satisfied with input, although reservations were expressed in some quarters with respect to policy and program development. In community services, participation was Branch oriented and some consultants felt a lack of overall regional involvement. Rehabilitation counsellors, however, seemed generally less satisfied with participation, though they did report the opportunities provided by regular regional staff meetings. But policies, they felt, were not responsive to their articulations.

Field workers varied in their opinions. With regard to participation in regional affairs, a few felt there were no or few opportunities, a smaller number felt opportunities were of the 'lip service' variety, and some felt there were limited opportunities. But a number greater than all of the above appeared generally satisfied. Most field workers, however, felt there were very limited opportunities for participation in policy development.

Some field workers reported participation through informal communications with supervisors and regional administrators in the smaller regional offices. Collective participation in regional staff meetings was the most commonly reported method, however. Other mechanisms now operating are Staff Development Committees, C.S.A.O. meetings, field worker committees, regional and inter-regional conferences and the Task Force. Opinions as to effectiveness of participation appeared a direct consequence of the knowledge of results. Lack of feedback occasions skepticism. Where recommendations deal with regional operations, results are more easily known and there was some satisfaction in this regard (except, of course,



when one's own particular cause is not heeded). Specifically, opinions were expressed that representatives had been instrumental in the production of the handbook, in the implementation of drug cards, a composite system for school checks, the mail-out system, organized procedures for earnings reports, in the abolition of the mail book and of some forms. They had influenced the direction of field worker training and the initiation of improved telephone message systems. Some clerical staff, likewise, reported that their suggestions had born fruit. Examples were extra telephone lines, improved office procedures, a floater for clerical staff. All this is qualified by the fact that field workers generally don't feel that the delivery system or management policies at large are yet responsive to their suggestions. Some, however, see hope in collective persistence.

Opinions differed and, in fact, conflicted as to the most effective methods of participation. A few felt that no really effective methods had yet been developed of getting field staff involved. For most field staff, participation is primarily through staff meetings and these accordingly were frequently cited as effective. For a number, committees or small groups in which problems can be analysed and proposals developed were the key to effective participation. "We should settle on a brief instead of listening to a pile of silly suggestions." Inter-regional conferences, special meetings away from the office and everyday grind which 'allow us to speak freely, think clearly and exchange ideas anonymously' were favoured by some. But whatever method is used, feedback is essential to sustain the process. Laid on programs at meetings that force people to participate were suggested to overcome a too prevalent apathy. Other effective methods - chewing away at your supervisor until results are seen; organizing client groups - they seem to get better results; periodic questionnaires and random samplings of field staff; "more interviews like this".

Feelings of involvement varied. There seemed to be different interpretations of the meaning of the term. Field workers generally are involved in their work but many don't feel involved with the Ministry. This springs from lack of involvement in general policy making. There is more identification with the region than with the Ministry. Head office and the 'corridors of power' tend to be remote. Some are feeling more generally involved in the Ministry through staff meetings. Through their work, field staff are involved in the Ministry though not necessarily involved with it.

Brainwashing (Question 12)

Most field staff felt that the orientation and training they received upon joining the Ministry was adequate. Some responded to this question with a qualified "yes". Very few felt it was clearly inadequate. Criticisms of the field worker orientation program were as follows:

- (1) The sessions in Toronto were not geared to the realities of field work. They stressed aspects of the work which caseloads in the field did not permit proportionate attention to.
- (2) There was not sufficient emphasis on attitudes and referral services.
- (3) There should be more training in the field, out of home office.
- (4) There should be fuller coverage of the topics.
- (5) Phase III was repetitious though enjoyable.

There were a number of suggestions. These indicated a felt need for more on-the-job practical initial training in the field. For example, one worker recommended three or four weeks in the regional office for familiarization with forms and procedures before going on the course. Some suggested more training in the field before assumption of caseload. One suggested a "floater" to train new personnel. Another felt there should be more training over a longer period of time. Another felt inadequately prepared with regard to the Family Benefits Act and working out budgets. Another recommended a "renewal conference" about a year after starting.

There was more division of opinion about the adequacy of orientation among other personnel. It would appear that the majority of Vocational Rehabilitation counsellors do not feel their initial orientation and training was adequate. G.W.A. budget personnel were divided in their attitudes. It would appear that the Ministry should give more thought to the orientation of clerical personnel to Ministry goals and services. Some have not received this. Those engaged in reception and intake seemed particularly to feel a need for this. Two field representatives reported they had received no orientation on joining, two reported that they had. In the other Branches, there were a variety of responses. Some reported adequacy with regard to the Branch but not with regard to the Ministry as a whole or regional operations generally. Two or three reported they had received no orientation.

Implications of responses to this question for Ministry training programs are difficult to assess. Expectations vary; old hands would not have benefited from new programs and some said that programs were better now than when they joined.

Shall We Gather in a Workshop? (Question 13)

There is general dissatisfaction among all the personnel interviewed with present provisions for on-going training and development. There was recognition that as a result of the establishment of region Staff Training and Development Committees the situation was improving. There seemed to be a positive response to this development. But a number of felt needs seem to remain unmet. These were the need for periodic refresher courses. (Many field workers want these.) There is a widely felt need for a greater provision for specialized courses; for example, among field workers, on referral procedure, counselling, or among rehabilitation personnel on various aspects of rehabilitation. It would appear that field work is becoming more complex and field personnel are dissatisfied with the extent of their knowledge. Suggestions as to methods of training stressed workshops and seminars rather than formal courses. Several field workers recommended out-of-office, inter-regional events. (Training sessions squeezed into office hours are not always conducive to learning.) Several suggested workshops or seminars with the personnel of other agencies. There was a lack of clear cut proposals as to where responsibility should lie. Some personnel look to their branches to provide training. In field services, there was some recognition of regional office responsibility, though a few suggested events in Toronto and others felt benefits accrued when Branch experts participated in regional events. There was considerable variation in knowledge of the Ministry resources available.

A number of field workers have ambivalent feelings about in-service training. They want it, but in light of caseloads and pressures "can we afford the time". They feel caught between meeting clients' needs in the short run and sacrificing them for long-term improvement.



Cap and Gown (Question 14)

A surprising number of personnel interviewed had taken, were taking, or hoped to take courses in academic institutions. Some had taken or sought further education for personal development; others sought to improve present job performance: others, looking to the future, were motivated by desire for up-grading and promotion. The major barriers were lack of appropriate or relevant courses in local institutions, time and money. Though some were satisfied with present policies, with regard to further education the majority felt the Ministry could do more. A frequent complaint among field workers was the lack of time-out to take work-related day time courses. This made it difficult to improve skills and keep up with the work. Others suggested increased financial assistance. One suggested the Ministry itself provide work-related courses not otherwise available. Another suggested incentives or bonuses be granted for successful course completion. Some reported lack of information as to Ministry policies and opportunities. The fact that their Branch couldn't guarantee promotion after further education bothered some interviewees. Some of the felt needs for further education could be met by in-service training programs.

The Party Line (Question 15)

Opinions among interviewees about the adequacy of information on policies and procedures were divided. Somewhat more field workers were satisfied than were not. Among other personnel, a more substantial majority were satisfied.

Among field workers, points made by the dissatisfied and qualifications expressed by the generally satisfied included the following:

(1) In the long run, information is sufficient but it is sometimes a long time forthcoming. New policies are sometimes not learned about until after a mistake has been made. It should be noted that this problem can have two causes - slow communications from head office on the one hand, inadequate communications within regional offices on the other. Answers seemed to imply the first, although a recommendation that there be staff meetings to review and clarify changes indicated that perhaps the problem

could be met to some extent at the local level. One secretary who was satisfied credited a good office communication system.

(2) Often field staff don't have advanced notice of policy. Changes are announced quickly and often with insufficient explanation. The announcement of policies through the media was a particular cause of annoyance and some reported embarrassment. This practice causes rushes of enquiries, but "we only know what appeared in the media".

(3) Information as to what policies or procedures are is sufficient in the opinion of some, but explanations and reasons are sometimes lacking.

(4) There are sometimes variations in administrative interpretations or policy 'shifts' which are not shared.

(5) There is unevenness. Good information is provided on some matters; others seem to be passed over.

Most of the field workers who commented on the matter said they had sufficient information to explain policies to the public. If they did not have the answer to an inquiry, usually they could find out. But use of the media, as mentioned above, occasioned frustration. Some field workers commented that they sometimes had difficulties in explaining Branch decisions to clients with respect to eligibility status or allowances.

Among other personnel, Indian Community Workers and some field representatives, clerical personnel and Vocational Rehabilitation Counsellors felt gaps existed. One or two comments indicated the various dimensions of the problem. One worker felt adequately informed as to procedures, but not to policies; another felt adequately informed about Branch programs but not about Ministry directives as a whole. Another reported that sometimes municipalities got information before regional offices. Lack of information with respect to changes in policy interpretation was mentioned by one Regional Administrator. Another mentioned lack of pre-knowledge of forthcoming changes.

#### A Message to Supervisors (Question 16)

Most interviewees reported that guidance and assistance from supervisors was sufficiently available. Not all field staff, of course, have supervisors in the field.

As one interviewee reported, it is "obviously something of a problem when one's supervisor is located in another city". Another reported, "There is usually help available by phone, but one cannot leave a situation and run to the phone. Like I said, you make a decision and stand alone."

Some field workers reported that sufficient supervision was "generally" or "usually" available. Others, though not dissatisfied, entered qualifications. Thus, "The Regional Administrator is available within limits." Or "The Supervisor is very busy or out of the office on my day in." The fact that field workers are out of the office most of the time appears to have resulted in a field corps accepting of considerable independence in problem-solving and work planning. Field workers, as a whole, are not a supervisor-dependent group. Some stressed their capacity for independence. A major felt need seems to be not for more individual supervision but for group sessions, perhaps with representatives of other agencies, for exchange of information and group problem solving. One field worker felt that the lack of a supervisor in a sub-office was beneficial. The staff had more independence and the office was more efficient. The implication that supervision is meddlesome is an indirect, if somewhat perverse, compliment.

Comments from personnel other than field workers indicated, in some services, that supervisory guidance was or had not been sufficient but was improving, that the supervisor lacked experience. Two comments brought forward important aspects of supervision. One relates to the guiding role of Branch head offices in technical matters vis-a-vis on-going local supervision. One worker reported that regional office guidance was sufficient, head office guidance was not. Another relates to the peer supervision of isolated professionals. One caseworker commented on the absence of peer supervision in professional service, for example, in crisis intervention.

#### The Two Cultures (Question 17)

Do reporting and communication systems afford head office understanding and appreciation of the field? Among interviewees, the Regional Administrators, the Youth and Recreation Consultants and social workers felt generally that they did. Regional Administrators' satisfaction was qualified somewhat. The situation for them



appears to be an improving one. One Regional Administrator felt that the "internal conflicts" of field workers were not appreciated at head office. Of interviewees in the other services, a few were divided and a few didn't know what head office knew. Indian Community Development and Citizenship interviewees reported improving head office-field communications. The complexity of this matter was indicated in the comment of another consultant that the Director and Assistant Director were knowledgeable, but "in-between" head office staff were not.

In the Field Services Branch, in Vocational Rehabilitation and among clerical staff, there is a widespread opinion that head office lacks knowledge and appreciation of field life and field conditions. Matters about which field workers think head office is uncomprehending are: (1) Variations in local conditions - head office understands our tasks but not the varying conditions under which they are performed; (2) Physical conditions and difficulties - inappreciation of the conditions of weather and roads, particularly in the north, which have to be battled with in meeting often needless special investigations and memos, was the head office blind spot most commonly reported on. (To many field workers these requests are unpredictable externalities invading and disrupting their individual work systems.); (3) The amount of work that has to be done at home; (4) Client needs and pressures.

Opinions as to the causes of the problem were varied. They included: (1) The general lack of an adequate communication system; (2) Insufficient field experience among head office personnel; (3) The reporting system - it was overly statistical and did not provide for the transmittal of full information about how time was spent and the tasks performed; (4) Undue reliance upon written communication and lack of face-to-face interaction; (5) The decision-making system itself created a head office-field dichotomy. One worker suggested the problem might, to some degree, lie with field staff themselves, but didn't elaborate.

It is possible, of course, that head office knows more than the field thinks it does. But if the field doesn't know this, that in itself is significant.

#### Images (Question 18)

Images of the Ministry held by income maintenance recipients vary. Considered in terms of an esteem and

satisfaction continuum, they range from very bad, through so-so, to good; the majority of interviewees reporting bad or so-so. Regional Administrators and caseworkers tended to report more favourable images than did field workers. Among the latter, those reporting unfavourable images were more than double in number than those reporting favourable ones.

In terms of constancy, the image is less clear. A number of interviewee comments indicate a powerful emotional component in client attitudes comprised of complex feelings about dependency, anxiety, and intense expectation which renders attitudes variable and volatile. The relationship with the field worker is, therefore, an important factor in client images, as also are the extent to which expectations are realized, and the impact of methods and procedures. Income maintenance recipients, perhaps more than other types of clients, are "procedure-sensitive". In terms of clarity and consistency, some interviewees felt clients had a very unclear image, if they had one at all; others reported a split or inconsistent image, clients appreciating the workers but not the organization.

More comment was offered on the context of bad images than of good. The prevailing image is one of a bureaucracy, procedurally oriented in its guardianship of public funds. In its good image, the Ministry is a problem solver and better than municipal welfare.

The causes of unfavourable images mentioned by interviewees included: (1) dissatisfaction with levels of allowance; (2) the investigative aspects of service; (3) correspondence with the Ministry that was not sufficiently explanatory; (4) delays in decision-making and the processing of grants; (5) lack of knowledge of the Ministry and difficulty in comprehending the complexities of administering public funds; (6) lack of work incentives; (7) long memories.

A number of field workers reported that the handbook had been a positive factor in presenting the Ministry to the client and recommended its continuance and further development. Decentralization and speedier response was frequently suggested. More flexible legislation, assumption of responsibility for dentures, glasses, etc., and improved attitudes on the part of some field workers, were also recommended.

In Vocational Rehabilitation, one Supervisor reported a fairly good client image, another an indifferent one. Rehabilitation secretaries reported good images but the counsellors didn't. According to the latter, clients feel the Ministry is impersonal and slow.

In the other programs, a number of interviewees reported good images or varying ones. The general impression is of a somewhat higher incidence of positive attitudes.

Images and attitudes among organizations likewise cover a wide range. Those with whom field workers have contact appear to be favourable, so-so, and unfavourable in about equal numbers. The same applies to other programs. Some organizations complain of ministry bureaucracy, that it is slow in response or behind the times, that it is not sophisticated enough or involved enough in community problems. One interviewee reported that agencies are fearful of being taken over by the government. Some agencies, apparently, feel the Ministry, not they, should provide special assistance. In the opinion of a number of interviewees, many organizations lack adequate knowledge of the Ministry. Nevertheless, respect and understanding would seem to be growing. Recommendations for improvement include: (1) greater involvement in community development; (2) more meetings and inter-worker contacts with agencies; (3) wide distribution of handbooks to agency and government offices; (4) improved mechanisms for relaying policy developments and changes to agencies; (5) more leeway in providing case information to agencies within the guidelines of confidentiality.

In the mind of the public, to the extent it is aware of it, the Ministry is a welfare agency and is, therefore, subject to attitudes predominant with respect to welfare. The prevailing mood of late has not been a sympathetic one and field personnel have borne some of the brunt of this. Among young progressivists, the Ministry is part of the system; among conservative taxpayers, it rewards the undeserving. "You get flack from both camps." The conservative mood is encountered the most often. It springs mostly, field workers feel, from inappropriate media publicity, lack of knowledge of Ministry programs, exaggerated conceptions of fraud and misuse. Recommendations to improve the situation stressed a more highly developed public relations, information and education program, including distribution of material, better use of the media, talks to service clubs, schools and other organizations, public meetings with questions and answers. The Ministry should decentralize, be more efficient, get more information to doctors, lawyers and ministers. One worker suggested establishing public relations personnel in large centres. Another recommended an intensive multi-media program to get across "types of situations". Another cautioned, however, against using the media.



More Room and Better Mileage (Question 19)

Most interviewees were not satisfied with office accommodation and many were dissatisfied with mileage. In many regional offices, it would appear, accommodation is too crowded and noisy, there is lack of privacy for work and for interviewing, too few telephones, lack of ventilation, inadequate washrooms, lunchrooms, meeting rooms. Some complained of lack of parking. (You can't do justice to an interview while worrying about the parking meter.) One interviewee was dissatisfied with having to work from home and felt at least the phone should be paid for. Rehabilitation Counsellors complained of the lack of proper facilities for their clients - washrooms, absence of ramps and railings, inadequate elevator service. The travel allowance is a prevalent cause of dissatisfaction. One suggested payment of a lump sum monthly, together with a lower mileage rate. Another had the opinion that travel over 5,000 miles is "at our expense". One complained of having to pay for own towing when caught in a snow drift because of no studded tires.

Other aspects of working conditions received little comment. Lack of financial incentive was mentioned. One field worker reported that the G.W.A. starting salary in the area was higher than the Ministry's maximum.

The Meeting of Objectives (Question 20)

A number of field workers, at all levels, felt that generally the Ministry was meeting the objectives of its income maintenance programs, but also many did not. One's opinion on this matter depends, of course, on one's perception of objectives. If the objective is to deliver effectively given services, then there would probably be agreement that by and large it was being reached, at least as far as the delivery of financial aid was concerned. Many field workers are of the opinion, however, that heavy work loads and procedural weakness in the delivery system are frustrating the achieving of objectives even when thus narrowly defined. If the objective is broadened to include meeting social needs, there would be wide-spread agreement that because of lack of time, serious shortfall exists. Lack of non-ministry community social services is also cited by some as a barrier to realizing objectives in this area of work. One social worker was of the opinion that the dual role of investigator and service worker was

not a viable one for goal realization. In this regard Toronto expectations of field workers were out of proportion to the training they had received. The interviewee also said field workers were not willing to accept resources when they were available.

Many field personnel assumed broader definition of objectives and are less optimistic about the extent of realization. It is commonly held that benefits are not adequate for meeting objectives, that programs encourage dependence rather than independence. Goal realization, in the opinion of some, requires more attention to preventive service than is presently being given. There should particularly be more service to the working poor. It was recognized that inflation has frustrated the aims of programs and for this reason it was suggested that there should be frequent review and revision of benefits. Some specific lacks in the Family Benefits program that frustrated goal realization are: (1) No provision for furniture and appliance replacement and minor repairs; (2) Inadequate provision for drugs, eyeglasses and other special needs. The problem of shelter costs was frequently mentioned. Family Benefits are meeting short-run day-by-day needs, but not accumulating long-run needs.

Social Service caseworkers appear to be struggling toward goals with resolution and some optimism. Lack of community resources, of inter-agency planning and co-ordination are barriers. Goals cannot be met, in the opinion of one, through direct service to a few selected clients. "We should move out of direct service."

Interviewees in Vocational Rehabilitation were generally of the opinion that goals as presently programmatically defined were being met, with the following caveats: Training-on-the-job objectives were not being met; goal realization for the retarded was frustrated by lack of acceptability on the part of the public; lack of the community resources essential in rehabilitation, e.g. assessment facilities, workshops, created a serious barrier in some communities; there was unnecessary duplication and insufficient co-ordination and co-operation among vocational rehabilitation agencies - V.R.S., Canada Manpower, U.I.C., Boards of Education, the Rehabilitation Foundation. Some interviewees would favour a broadening of goals and services in rehabilitation, the extension of the rehabilitation approach to persons not now served.

In the Community Services Division, interviewees tended to stress the broad and flexible nature of goals. Some felt they were not yet defined specifically enough to permit the application of measures of success or

failure. "More rigorous definition - more rigorous pursuit." Change renders assessment difficult. Changing conditions and expectations puts goals in flux. The heavy workload and lack of secretarial service was frustrating one interviewee in the realization of objectives.

A large number of suggestions were made for program change. These are listed below:

1. General Income Maintenance

- Guaranteed annual income to replace present programs.
- More help for the working poor - perhaps start with drug plan and dental plan.
- Increased allowances for single unemployables.
- Community programs to motivate people to want more from life than living on an allowance.
- Better federal-provincial co-ordination in income maintenance to reduce administrative costs.
- Special job counselling for income maintenance recipients.
- Simplified programs.
- Extend dental plan to all programs.
- Drug plan.
- Combine F.B.A. and G.W.A. for greater equity.
- Province to assume responsibility for G.W.A.
- Programs for single persons inadequate.

2. Changes in Family Benefits Program

Re Benefits:

- Add phone rate to budget.
- Provide for furniture replacement and repairs.
- Coverage for drugs, eye glasses, etc.
- Common drug and dental cards for both F.B.A. and G.W.A.
- More lump sum payments.
- Repair Committee should be speedier and more reasonable.



- Regional fund for emergency repairs.
- More provision for food and clothing for teenagers.
- More of a sliding scale in determining need and amount of allowance.
- More adequate allowances.

Re Eligibility:

- Single women eligible at 55.
- Change re common-law unions. If previous children could be supported as foster children, it would remove incentive for dishonesty. Present husband would be more willing to assume responsibility.

Re Work:

- Increased financial incentives. Retention of larger share of earnings. Permit putting earnings toward shelter costs, home improvements, setting up small business, finishing education, day care.
- Provision for car fare, baby sitting fees.
- Free provincial day nurseries for Family Benefits mothers.
- More day care.
- Incentives for young mothers to retrain.
- Disregard children's summer earnings.

Re Service Delivery:

- Separate income maintenance and social service.
- Simplify procedures.
- More use of mail-outs.
- Reduce caseloads, more workers.
- More effective liaison with Canada Manpower and U.I.C.

(See also numerous suggestions in other sections of report.)

Re Other Matters:

- Provincial follow up on "show cause" actions instead of client. Present system too 'wishy-washy'.
- More counselling to treat emotional problems brought on by limited income.
- Clients should be contacted re what programs they would like.
- Personnel to investigate common-law cases. Too many recipients living common law. Field worker feels she is not doing an efficient job.
- More prosecutions by Ministry in cases of flagrant fraud.

3. Other Programs

- Eliminate duplication of services in vocational rehabilitation, e.g.:
  - (a) University training under Student Aid, with provision for transportation allowances for handicapped.
  - (b) Prosthetic appliances under O.H.I.P. or extended care.
  - (c) Co-ordination of job placement by V.R.S. and Canada Manpower.
- More rehabilitation counsellors and secretaries.
- Extend rehabilitation service to socially handicapped mothers.
- Provide cars for rehabilitation clients to get to and from work as less expensive than taxis, if no other means are available. Alternately, press for more adequate facilities for handicapped in public transit.
- In Legal Aid, more use of people who are not lawyers but are proficient in law.
- Provision of marriage counselling services to alienated couples prior to coming to Legal Aid Assessment.

- Change in policy re privileged information re Family Benefits clients applying for Legal Aid.
- Perhaps increased grants for recreation.

#### The Last Word (Question 21)

The last question asked for any additional matters to be brought to the attention of the Task Force. A number of comments dealt with program changes and have been included in the preceding section. A number of interviewees also seized this opportunity to re-emphasize points made earlier. The desire for better office accommodation, for improved mileage, for quicker decision-making and communications in service delivery particularly were repeated here. Other points made are listed below:

#### Re General Administration

- Better inter-departmental co-ordination.
- More co-operation among branches of the Ministry.
- Top executive officers should have some experience of field work.
- Standards for field workers' clothing and appearance.
- More sub-offices in the Northern areas, for example at Wawa, White River.
- Sub-offices should have at least one supervisor.
- There is undue urgency on political referrals. Field worker has seen cases with \$10,000 in bank and two or three properties. If applicant had had knowledge, he wouldn't have bothered. Abolish this function.
- There seems to be a feeling of mistrust between field workers and supervisory and administrative staff. Some field workers were reluctant to put names to interviews for fear of recrimination.
- Sarnia office be officially opened.



### Re Personnel Policies

- Hiring policy needs clarifying. If the goal is income maintenance, the ministry should hire personnel with clerical training, not with training in social service. People now hired are empathic and get frustrated with heavy case-loads.
- There is no recognition for extraordinary service. It is inequitable that one field worker is always caught up and another always behind and asking for help.
- Salaries are not competitive with other agencies, with industry, with the Federal government. Good staff do not stay with the Ministry.
- Strongly recommend educational leave, with or without pay.
- More incentive for further education. Chances of advancement without a degree are pretty slim.
- More formal training and more peer contact for social workers.
- There should be floater field workers to handle caseloads during vacations or sickness, to prevent work build up.
- More utilization of field staff abilities in special fields, e.g. in preparing educational films. Need it all be done at head office by Information Branch?
- More overall, inter-branch staff training and development. There should be a part-time training officer in each branch and in each regional office for the total Ministry. Intensive orientation training is necessary for familiarization with the various programs and to learn total objectives of the Ministry.
- More stress on experience and less on formal qualifications in job requirements for rehabilitation work.
- Would like course on office management - practical and functional.

### Re Administrative Procedures

- Forms and documents - U.I.B. is antique; forms should be updated and Form 40 revised. More questions for foster mothers on Form 1. Clients don't like to

submit divorce documents. There should be a special form for Field Worker verification.

- Weekly reports are not needed.
- There should be case-aides for field workers.
- Experiment with tape recorders for interviews.
- Calling cards perpetually are not forthcoming because of expected changes.
- Speedier processing. Family Benefits Branch should inform field immediately if more information is required.
- More adequate equipment.

#### General

- The Ministry shouldn't help place people in high-rise apartments where O.H.C. pays rent subsidy to large development corporations. The Ministry shouldn't be involved in these arrangements.
- People emotionally unfit to work and quite destitute are turned down. Why?
- More grass roots participation to afford clients more influence in policy development.
- There is insufficient recognition of investment potential of improving economic and social conditions of clients. It would reduce social costs of mental and physical ill health, drug addiction, crime, violence and unemployment.

Several comments were addressed specifically to the Task Force. One interviewee would like it to have a close look at field worker car expenses - insurance, tires, gas, depreciation - in relation to mileage rates now in effect. Another felt it should have better organized its program and had more personal contact. Another felt it should have been more representative. One interviewee hopes its reports would not gather dust. Another requests feed back on its recommendations. One worker inquired as to what special steps are to be taken by the Task Force as to the future kinds of involvement employees will have. She recommends involvement in policy decisions, entailing direct input, perhaps through voting by all workers.

QUESTIONNAIRE

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

MINISTRY TASK FORCE INTER-REGION INFORMATION PROJECT

A) THE JOB ITSELF

The intent of the questions in this section is to give the Task Force information about how field personnel see their jobs and how they feel about them, about problems encountered in carrying them out, and about the satisfactions and frustrations encountered.

- 1) What does interviewee consider to be the major responsibilities of his or her position?
- 2) Are these responsibilities and the tasks involved defined with sufficient clarity? Are they compatible one with the other? If not, what are the areas of uncertainty or conflict? What problems do they cause? How serious?

Note re Question 2: Most jobs entail several tasks and may require workers to perform more than one role. For example, a Family Benefits field worker is expected to be a control agent, e.g. to investigate circumstances of clients, and at the same time to advise and assist the client. Are there two roles here? Are they compatible?

- 3) What about workload? Is it reasonable? Too heavy? Does it permit appropriately prompt response to requests for service? Can interviewee give adequate attention to all aspects of the work?
- 4) What decisions does interviewee make in carrying out his or her responsibilities? What influence do these decisions have on service delivery?

Note re Question 4: There are various sorts of decisions. For example, there are decisions to give an allowance to an individual or make a grant to an organization; there are also the ongoing performance decisions involved in referral or counselling or consultation to organizations; there are decisions as to the best way of tackling a situation. Again, a worker may be called upon to make a recommendation to head office or to others and this involves deciding what to recommend. If interviewee says that he or she does not make decisions, make a note of this fact and then probe a little deeper.

(Cont'd.)



MINISTRY TASK FORCE INTER-REGION INFORMATION PROJECT

- 5) Does interviewee feel that job offers scope for the exercise of initiative and judgment? What skills are felt to be most important to effective job performance?
- 6) What are the major satisfactions of the work? What are major frustrations, if any?
- 7) Does interviewee have any suggestions for changing the responsibilities or tasks of the position in the interests of better service delivery, or worker satisfaction? For example, more specialization?

B) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- 8) What are interviewee's opinions about: (1) the amount of authority delegated to the regional offices (or other branch offices in the field) to make decisions in service delivery, and (2) the procedures followed? What influence do these have upon service delivery? upon interviewee's job performance? What are the reasons for opinions expressed? Any recommendations?

C) PARTICIPATION

- 9) What opportunities do interviewee and colleagues have to make suggestions and recommendations with regard to:  
(a) Regional operations - i.e. organization of work, staff utilization, etc.? and  
(b) Program policies and procedures?
- 10) In what manner does interviewee participate in regional or general policy making? Individually? Collectively in staff meeting or committee? Have recommendations born results? Examples? Generally does interviewee feel involved in ministry or program development?
- 11) What, in interviewee's opinion, have been the most effective methods of getting field staff involved in considering policy and administrative matters? Why? Suggestions for change?

(Cont'd.)

MINISTRY TASK FORCE INTER-REGION INFORMATION PROJECT

D) STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- 12) Does interviewee feel he or she received adequate orientation and training upon joining the Ministry? Any recommendations to improve present training program for new staff?

Note re Question 12: If interviewing field workers, find out when they joined the ministry. There are field workers who joined the ministry before the present training program was set up.

- 13) Does interviewee feel that present on-going in-service training and development programs meet his or her needs? Does interviewee know what opportunities are available? If so, how might they be improved, e.g. more staff seminars, refresher courses, workshops or specialized subjects.

Note re Question 13: This question deals with in-service training, not with formal course work in educational institutions.

- 14) Is interviewee taking any courses in colleges or other institutions? If so, with what end in view? If interviewee is not taking course, would he or she like to? What are barriers? Does interviewee feel Ministry could do more to facilitate further academic training?

E) INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 15) Does interviewee feel that he or she is provided with sufficient information and explanation of policies and procedures and of changes to them? Can he adequately answer the questions of clients or the general public? Examples?
- 16) Does interviewee feel that supervision, i.e. guidance, assistance in problem solving, is sufficiently available?
- 17) Does interviewee feel that the reporting and communications system give head office adequate knowledge and appreciation of field tasks and field conditions?

(Cont'd.)

MINISTRY TASK FORCE INTER-REGION INFORMATION PROJECT

F) THE MINISTRY'S IMAGE

- 18) (a) In interviewee's experience, what sort of image is held of the Ministry by:
- a) clients;
  - b) other organizations (including local authorities);
  - c) the general public.
- (b) Is image held by each good, bad, so-so? If bad, why?  
- inadequate or wrong information about Ministry? -  
dissatisfaction with Ministry services?
- (c) What is basis of interviewee's opinion? Any suggestions to improve knowledge and acceptance of Ministry?

G) WORKING CONDITIONS

- 19) Is interviewee satisfied with present working conditions, e.g. office accommodation? other matters?

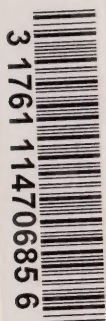
H) PROGRAM CHANGE

- 20) Generally, does the interviewee feel that the programs in which he is engaged are meeting their objectives?  
If not, why not? Any suggestions for program improvement?
- 21) Are there any other matters interviewee wishes to bring to attention of Task Force?









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